

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau

**Final Report**  
**Iowa Child and Family Services Review**

**October 14, 2003**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Administration for Children and Families**  
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**  
**Children's Bureau**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Final Report: Iowa Child and Family Services Review**

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Iowa. The CFSR assesses State performance with regard to seven outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being and seven systemic factors pertaining to the State's capacity to achieve positive outcomes for children and families. The CFSR was conducted the week of May 19, 2003. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Behavioral, Developmental, and Protective Services for Adults, Children and Families.
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides State child welfare data for the years 1999 through 2001;
- Reviews of 50 cases at three sites in the State (Linn County [Cedar Rapids], Polk County [Des Moines], and Woodbury County [Sioux City]; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

A key finding of the Iowa CFSR was that Iowa is in substantial conformity with two of the seven outcomes and three of the seven systemic factors. With regard to the outcomes, Iowa achieved substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate) and Well Being Outcome 2 (Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs). The CFSR determined that DHS is effective in addressing the risk of harm to children either through placement in foster care or through providing adequate services to maintain children safely in their own homes. The CFSR also determined that DHS makes concerted efforts to address the educational needs of children in the child welfare agency caseloads.

One of the weakest areas of State performance on the outcomes occurred for Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations). The CFSR found that DHS is not consistently effective with regard to (1) preventing foster care re-entries; (2) ensuring that children experience placement stability while they are in foster care; (3) establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner; (4) achieving finalized adoptions in a timely manner; or (5) ensuring that older children in long-term foster care received appropriate services to assist them in making the transition from foster care to independent living. Despite these concerns, the CFSR found that DHS is consistently effective in reunifying children with their families in a timely manner.

Stakeholders interviewed during the onsite CFSR noted that the courts, in general, make concerted efforts to adhere to the timelines for permanency established by both the Adoption and Safe Families Act and by State statute, and for the most part meet all requirements.

However, some stakeholders also noted that the quality of case reviews and hearings is not always sufficient to effectively move the child toward permanency. In addition, stakeholders also noted that there is reluctance on the part of some judges to terminate parental rights for a child if the child is not in an adoptive placement, which often results in delays in achieving finalized adoptions.

Another area of concern with regard to the State's CFSR performance pertained to Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs). Only 24 percent of the 50 cases reviewed were determined to have substantially achieved this outcome. Although all of the indicators for this outcome were determined to be areas in need of improvement, the frequency of caseworker contacts with the children in their caseloads was identified as the most significant problem area within this outcome. Case reviewers determined that caseworker contact with children was of sufficient frequency and quality in only 10 percent of the 50 applicable cases. The lack of contact was attributed to the excessively high caseloads carried by caseworkers in the State, and the consequent reliance on information from other sources, such as service providers, to monitor children's safety and well-being.

With regard to the systemic factors, the State was determined to be in substantial conformity with the factors of Statewide Information System; Agency Responsiveness to the Community; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Case Review System, Training, Service Array, and Quality Assurance System. Information from the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews conducted during the onsite CFSR attributes many of the current difficulties experienced by DHS to recent budget cuts in all areas of child welfare agency functioning. In recent years, funds available for services, training, quality assurance, and even maintenance of the management information system have been substantially reduced and there is an anticipation of further budget cuts in the future.

The CFSR findings with regard to the State's efforts to address the needs of Native American children and the child welfare agency's relationship with the Tribes were mixed. Although some stakeholders, particularly in Woodbury County, expressed the opinion that the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) are not routinely adhered to by the courts and the agency, other stakeholders reported that DHS is in the process of working collaboratively with Tribes within the State and has made extensive progress in improving agency adherence to ICWA requirements.

The overall findings with regard to the State's performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance relative to the national standards and table 4 provides information pertaining to the State's substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR.

## **I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES**

### **Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect**

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two indicators. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1) and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment for the same children (item 2).

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 82.9 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.
- The State did not meet the national standards for (1) the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period, and (2) the percentage of children maltreated while in foster care.

A key finding of the CFSR case reviews was that, although caseworkers established face-to-face contact with children and families in accordance with State-established timeframes when the maltreatment reports involved immediate threat or high-risk, they were less consistent in meeting these timeframes when the maltreatment reports were not classified as high risk.

In addition, although case reviews did not identify extensive repeat maltreatment as it is measured for the CFSR (item 2), the maltreatment recurrence rate (11.2%) reported in the State Data Profile indicates that in 2001, Iowa did not meet the national standard for this measure of 6.1 percent or less. The State Data Profile also indicates that Iowa's incidence of maltreatment in foster care in 2001 (.89%) did not meet the national standard of .57 percent or less. Stakeholders commenting on the issue of maltreatment in foster care suggested that this problem may be attributed to situations in which there are too many children in one foster home or in which there has not been an appropriate match between the children's needs and the foster family's ability to meet those needs.

### **Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate**

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two indicators. One indicator (item 3) addresses the issue of child welfare agency efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing services to the families that ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other indicator (item 4) pertains to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in reducing risk of harm to children.

Iowa achieved substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 93.5 percent of the cases reviewed, which meets the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.

For the most part, case reviewers determined that DHS was effective in: (1) providing appropriate services to families to protect children in the home and prevent their removal, and (2) appropriately removing children from their homes when the potential risk of harm was high. Some stakeholders, however, expressed concern that in some cases the agency's assessment of risk is not sufficiently comprehensive to capture underlying problems in the family, particularly mental health issues.

**Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.**

There are six indicators incorporated in the assessment of permanency outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in preventing foster care re-entry (item 5), ensuring placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the child welfare agency's success in achieving permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9), or whether children who have "other planned living arrangements" as a case goal are in stable placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 50.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for fiscal year (FY) 2001, the State did not meet the national standard for the rate of foster care re-entries.

However, the FY 2001 data reported in the State Data Profile indicate that Iowa met the national standards for (1) the percentage of children who were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care, (2) the percentage of children who were discharged to finalized adoptions within 24 months of entry into foster care, and (3) the percentage of children who experienced no more than 2 placements after having been in foster care for 12 months or less.

A key case review finding was that five of the six indicators for Permanency Outcome 1 were rated as an Area Needing Improvement. In addition, performance on this outcome varied across the sites included in the onsite CFSR. Case reviewers determined that the outcome was substantially achieved in 75 percent of Woodbury County cases, compared to only 42 percent of Linn County cases and 41 percent of Polk County cases.

With regard to Permanency Outcome 1, the key concerns identified through the case reviews pertained to the agency's inconsistent effectiveness with regard to (1) preventing children's re-entry into foster care, and (2) achieving finalized adoptions in a timely

manner. At least 40 percent of the applicable cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement for both of these indicators. Despite these concerns, case reviewers also found that DHS was effective in reunifying children in a timely manner.

**Permanency Outcome 2. The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.**

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six indicators that assess the child welfare agency's performance with regard to (1) placing children in foster care in close proximity to their parents and close relatives (item 11); (2) placing siblings together (item 12); (3) ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13); (4) preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14); (5) seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15); and (6) promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 82.1 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

Key CFSR findings were that DHS makes concerted efforts to (1) place children in close proximity to their families, (2) place siblings together in foster care, and (3) promote frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care. Areas of concern with respect to this outcome pertained to a lack of consistent effort on the part of DHS to (1) seek and assess relatives as placement resources, (2) preserve children's connections to their families and racial and religious heritage, and (3) support or promote the parent-child relationship.

**Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.**

Well Being Outcome 1 incorporates four indicators. One pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents are assessed and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second indicator assesses the child welfare agency's effectiveness with regard to actively involving parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining indicators examine the frequency and quality of caseworker's contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and the children's parents (item 20).

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved for 24.0 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a

determination of substantial conformity.

A key finding relevant to this outcome was that case reviewers determined that in a large percentage of cases, the frequency of face-to-face contact between DHS caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads was determined to be insufficient to meet the needs of children or to effectively promote attainment of case goals. Case reviewers found that the lack of adequate contact between caseworkers and children resulted in caseworkers being unaware of important information and/or events in the children's lives. For example, in one case a caseworker was not aware that an adolescent in foster care had graduated from high school and thought that he was a junior in high school. In another case, the caseworker thought that the child had supervised visits with his sibling, but he did not. In another case, the caseworker did not know that the child had frequent visits with her biological mother although the mother's parental rights had been terminated.

Information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that the State expected that the onsite CFSR would identify caseworker contacts with children and parents as areas needing improvement. According to the Statewide Assessment, severe budget cuts have significantly reduced the number of agency staff, which has resulted in very high caseloads that adversely impact the ability of caseworkers to establish face-to-face contact with parents and children.

Case reviewers also determined that DHS was not consistently effective in assessing and meeting the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents or in involving children and parents in the case planning process. Stakeholders reported that the agency's use of some form of family group decision making in the case-planning process resulted in greater involvement of parents and children in the case planning process, but that caseworkers were not using this format on a consistent basis, primarily because of their excessively high caseloads.

## **Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.**

There is only one indicator for Well-Being Outcome 2 and it pertains to the child welfare agency's effectiveness in addressing and meeting the educational needs of children in both foster care and in-home services cases (item 21).

Iowa achieved substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 92.7 percent of the applicable cases, which exceeds the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

The CFSR found that DHS made concerted efforts to effectively assess children's educational needs and provide appropriate services to meet those needs. Stakeholders in all counties reported that there is a positive and productive collaboration between DHS and the schools, which allows the agency to be effective in meeting children's educational needs.

### **Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.**

This outcome incorporates two indicators that assess the child welfare agency's efforts to meet children's physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs.

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 78.7 percent of the 47 applicable cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

Although the individual items pertaining to this outcome were rated as a Strength for the State, there were an insufficient number of cases in which both items were rated as a Strength. That is, in some cases, the agency was effective in addressing children's physical health issues, but not their mental health service needs, and in some cases, the opposite was true.

## **II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS**

### **Statewide Information System**

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating a statewide information system that can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care.

Iowa was determined to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor because the State's Statewide Information System can identify the required information for all children in foster care.

### **Case Review System**

Five indicators are used to assess the State's performance with regard to the systemic factor of a Case Review System. The indicators examine the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), the implementation of procedures to seek termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the timeframes established in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 28), and the notification and inclusion of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers in case reviews and hearings (item 29).



Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the factor of Case Review system. Although the State implements 6-month reviews and 12-month permanency hearings on a timely basis, and has a procedures in place for seeking termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the CFSR determined that case plans are not consistently developed jointly with the child's parents. In addition, the CFSR found that key stakeholders in the agency, courts, and community do not seem to have a clear and uniform understanding of who is responsible for notifying foster parents of reviews or court hearings, although the Statewide Assessment indicates that there is a written protocol for this process.

### **Quality Assurance System**

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System is based on whether the State has developed standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care (item 30), and whether the State is operating a statewide quality assurance system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement (item 31).

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. Although the State has implemented standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care, DHS does not have a quality assurance system that operates Statewide.

### **Training**

The systemic factor of Training incorporates an assessment of the State's new caseworker training program (item 32), ongoing training for child welfare agency staff (item 33), and training for foster and adoptive parents (item 34).

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. Although the CFSR determined that the State has a well-conceptualized and broad pre-service training curriculum for caseworkers, the training system is not functioning as it should. Specifically, the ability of caseworkers to participate in training in a timely manner has been compromised due to reductions in the frequency of offering the training and the high caseloads that caseworkers carry. Furthermore, in the absence of a functioning quality assurance system, the agency is reliant on front-line supervisors to ensure quality casework, but no training is provided to assist them in this task. In addition, the CFSR found that opportunities for ongoing training are not readily available because of the 75 percent reduction in the agency's budget allocated for training. Despite these concerns, the CFSR found that pre-service and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents are perceived as being of high quality and readily accessible.

## **Service Array**

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array addresses three questions: (1) Does the State have in place an array of services to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? (2) Are these services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? And (3) Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and family served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The CFSR found that recent and severe budget cuts have resulted in significant reductions in the service array, leading to a number of critical services either being eliminated or sharply reduced. Consequently, even when services are available, there are long waiting lists. In addition, services are not available in all areas of the State, particularly in rural areas. The CFSR determined that a lack of foster family or residential treatment services in some areas of the State often results in children being placed away from their home communities. Finally, the CFSR found that services are not routinely meeting the diverse needs of the children and families, primarily because the flexibility in designing services to meet individual needs has been significantly reduced due to budget cuts.

## **Agency Responsiveness to the Community**

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of the State's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the Child and Family Services Plan (items 38 and 39), and the extent to which the State coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or federally-assisted programs serving the same population.

Iowa is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsive to the Community. The CFSR found that the State child welfare agency engages many partners in the development and implementation of the goals and objectives of the CFSP and maximizes opportunities to coordinate with Federal and federally assisted service programs. However, the CFSR also determined that there is a need for DHS to be more inclusive of Tribes in planning its goal and activities.

## **Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention**

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State's standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State's compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the States efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State's activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children.

Iowa is in substantial conformity with this systemic factor. The CFSR found that standards for foster homes and care facilities have been established and are applied consistently, and background clearances are routinely conducted for all foster families. In addition, the State has a functioning process for obtaining cross-jurisdictional resources for waiting children.

Despite these strengths, the CFSR determined that, although the State has a Statewide recruitment contract in place, there is a strong need to focus concentrated efforts on foster and adoptive homes that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children entering foster care, particularly Native American children.

**Table 1. Iowa CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items**

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings		
	<i>In Substantial Conformity?</i>	<i>Percent Substantially Achieved*</i>	<i>Met National Standards?</i>	<i>Rating**</i>	<i>Percent Strength</i>	<i>Met National Standards</i>
Safety Outcome 1-Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	82.9	No			
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				ANI	73	
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				ANI	92	No
Safety Outcome 2 - Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	Yes	93.5				
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				Strength	100	
Item 4: Risk of harm				Strength	93	
Permanency Outcome 1- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	50.0	3 met, 1 not met			
Item 5: Foster care re-entry				ANI	60	No
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				ANI	82	Yes
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	75	
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship and placement with relatives				Strength	92	Yes
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	55	Yes
Item 10: Other planned living arrangement				ANI	80	
Permanency Outcome 2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	82.1				
Item 11: Proximity of placement				Strength	95	
Item 12: Placement with siblings				Strength	88	
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				Strength	85	
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	79	
Item 15: Relative placement				ANI	77	
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	79	

\*90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

\*\*Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI)

**Table 2. Iowa CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well Being Outcomes and Items**

<b>Outcomes and Indicators</b>	<b>Outcome Ratings</b>		<b>Item Ratings</b>			
	<i><b>In Substantial Conformity?</b></i>	<i><b>Percent Substantially Achieved*</b></i>	<i><b>Met National Standards</b></i>	<i><b>Rating**</b></i>	<i><b>Percent Strength</b></i>	<i><b>Met National Standards</b></i>
Well Being Outcome 1 - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs	No	24.0				
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents				ANI	72	
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning				ANI	66	
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child				ANI	10	
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents				ANI	23	
Well Being Outcome 2 - Children receive services to meet their educational needs	Yes	92.7				
Item 21: Educational needs of child				Strength	93	
Well Being Outcome 3 - Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs are met	No***	78.7				
Item 22: Physical health of child				Strength	89	
Item 23: Mental health of child				Strength	86	

\*90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

\*\*Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI)

\*\*\*Although the individual items pertaining to this outcome were rated as a Strength, there were many cases in which only one of the items was rated as a Strength. That is in some cases the agency was effective in addressing a child's physical health needs but not their mental health needs, and in some cases, the opposite was true.

**Table 3: Iowa's Performance on the Six Outcome Measures for Which National Standards have been Established**

<b>Outcome Measure</b>	<b>National Standard</b>	<b>Iowa Data</b>
Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report in the first 6 months of CY 2001, what percent were victims of another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?	6.1% or less	11.2%
Of all children who were in foster care in the first 9 months of CY 2001, what percent experienced maltreatment from foster parents or facility staff members?	.57% or less	.89%
Of all children who entered foster care in FY 2001, what percent was re-entering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode?	8.6% or less	25.0%
Of all children reunified from foster care in FY 2001, what percent were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care?	76.2% or more	81.0%
Of all children who were adopted from foster care in FY 2001, what percent were adopted within 24 months of their entry into foster care?	32.0% or more	49.0%
Of all children in foster care during FY 2001 for less than 12 months, what percent experienced no more than 2 placement settings?	86.7% or more	88.0%

**Table 4: Iowa CFSR Ratings for the Seven Systemic Factors**

<b>Systemic Factors</b>	<b>In Substantial Conformity?*</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>IV. Statewide Information System</b>	<b>Yes (3)</b>	
Item 24: System can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals of children in foster care		Strength
<b>V. Case Review System</b>	<b>No (2)</b>	
Item 25: Process for developing a case plan and for joint case planning with parents		ANI
Item 26: Process for 6-month case reviews		Strength
Item 27: Process for 12-month permanency hearings		Strength
Item 28: Process for seeking TPR in accordance with ASFA		Strength
Item 29: Process for notifying caregivers of reviews and hearings and for opportunity for them to be heard		ANI
<b>VI. Quality Assurance System</b>	<b>No (2)</b>	
Item 30: Standards to ensure quality services and ensure children's safety and health		Strength
Item 31: Identifiable QA system that evaluates the quality of services and improvements		ANI
<b>VII. Training</b>	<b>No (2)</b>	
Item 32: Provision of initial staff training		ANI
Item 33: Provision of ongoing staff training that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge.		ANI
Item 34: Provision of training for caregivers and adoptive parents that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge		Strength
<b>VIII. Service Array</b>	<b>No (1)</b>	
Item 35: Availability of array of critical services		ANI
Item 36: Accessibility of services across all jurisdictions		ANI
Item 37: Ability to individualize services to meet unique needs		ANI
<b>IX. Agency Responsiveness to the Community</b>	<b>Yes (4)</b>	
Item 38: Engages in ongoing consultation with critical stakeholders in developing the CFSP		Strength
Item 39: Develops annual progress reports in consultation with stakeholders		Strength
Item 40: Coordinates services with other Federal programs		Strength
<b>X. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention</b>	<b>Yes (4)</b>	
Item 41: Standards for foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 42: Standards are applied equally to all foster family and child care institutions		Strength
Item 43: Conducts necessary criminal background checks		Strength
Item 44: Diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect children's racial and ethnic diversity		ANI
Item 45: Uses cross-jurisdictional resources to find placements		Strength

\*Systemic factors are rated on a scale from 1 to 4. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates "Not in Substantial Conformity." A rating of 3 or 4 indicates Substantial Conformity.

\*\* Individual items may be rated either as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement (ANI)

**FINAL REPORT: IOWA CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW**

## Introduction

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Iowa. The CFSR was conducted the week of May 19, 2003. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Behavioral, Developmental, and Protective Services for Adults, Children and Families.
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which provides State child welfare data for the years 1999 through 2001;
- Reviews of 50 cases at three sites in the State; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys.

The key characteristics of the 50 cases reviewed are the following:

- Twenty-two cases were reviewed in Polk County (Des Moines), 14 in Linn County (Cedar Rapids), and 14 in Woodbury County (Sioux City).
- All 50 cases had been open cases at some time during the period under review.
- 28 cases were “foster care cases” (cases in which children were in the care and custody of the State child welfare agency and in an out-of-home placement at some time during the period under review), and 22 were “in-home services cases” (cases in which families received services from the child welfare agency while children remained with their families and no child in the family was in out-of-home care during the period under review).
- Of the 28 foster care cases, 8 children (28%) were younger than age 10 at the start of the period under review; 3 children (11%) were at least 10 years old, but not yet 13 years old; and 17 children (61%) were 13 years of age or older at the start of the period under review.
- Of the 28 foster care cases, 10 children were male and 18 were female.
- Of all 50 cases, there were 35 cases (70%) in which all children in the family were White, 5 cases in (10%) in which all children in the family were Black, 3 cases (6%) in which all children in the family were Hispanic, 2 cases (4%) in which all children in the family were Native American, 2 cases (4%) in which all children in the family were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3 cases (6%) in which all children in the family were of two or more races.
- Of the 50 cases reviewed, the **primary** reason for the opening of a child welfare agency case was the following:
  - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 10 cases (20%)



- Sexual abuse – 7 cases (14%)
- Child’s behavior/child in juvenile justice – 7 cases (14%)
- Mental/physical health of child – 6 cases (12%)
- Substance abuse of parents – 6 cases (12%)
- Physical abuse – 5 cases (10%)
- Abandonment – 3 cases (6%)
- Domestic violence in child’s home – 2 cases (4%)
- Mental/physical health of parent – 2 cases (4%)
- Medical Neglect – 1 case (2%)
- Other – 1 case (2%) (Arrest of custodial parent)
- Of the 50 cases reviewed, the most frequently cited of all reasons for children coming to the attention of the child welfare agency were the following:
  - Child’s behavior/juvenile justice/substance abuse – 24 cases (48% of all cases)
  - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 24 cases (48% of all cases)
  - Substance abuse by parents – 24 cases (48% of all cases)
  - Physical abuse – 19 cases (38% of all cases)
- In 12 (43%) of the 28 foster care cases, the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and remained in care during the entire period under review.

The first section of the report presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State’s performance in achieving specific outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table presenting key findings, a discussion of the State’s status with regard to the outcome, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed. For the most part, findings are presented for all three counties taken together, with differences among counties described when they are particularly noteworthy. The second section of the report provides an assessment and discussion of the seven systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency’s ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.

## SECTION 1: OUTCOMES

### I. SAFETY

#### Safety Outcome 1

<b>Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Linn (Cedar Rapids)</b>	<b>Polk (Des Moines)</b>	<b>Woodbury (Sioux City)</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	10	17	7	34	82.9
Partially Achieved:	1	4	2	7	17.1
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0	0	0	
Not Applicable:	3	1	5	9	
<b>Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:</b>					
	<b>National Standard</b>	<b>State's Percentage</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Standard</b>	
Repeat maltreatment	6.1	11.2		X	
Maltreatment of children in foster care	.57	.89		X	

#### STATUS OF SAFETY OUTCOME 1

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 82.9 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.
- The State did not meet the national standard for the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period.
- The State did not meet the national standard for the percentage of children maltreated while in foster care.

A key CFSR finding was that DHS is not consistent in responding to maltreatment reports in accordance with State-established timeframes. The case reviews revealed that caseworkers established face-to-face contact with children and families in a timely manner when the maltreatment reports involved immediate threat or high-risk. However, caseworkers were not consistent in establishing timely face-to-face contact when the maltreatment reports were not classified as high risk.

Although case reviews did not identify extensive repeat maltreatment as it is measured for the CFSR (item 2), the maltreatment recurrence rate reported in the State Data Profile indicates that Iowa did not meet the national standard for this measure. The State Data Profile also indicates that Iowa's incidence of maltreatment in foster care in 2001 did not meet the national standard. Stakeholders commenting on the issue of maltreatment in foster care suggested that this problem may be attributed to situations in which there are too many children in one foster home or in which there has not been an appropriate match between the children's needs and the foster family's ability to meet those needs.

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented below.

### **Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      X Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 15 of the 50 cases. Thirty-five cases were not applicable because they did not involve reports of child maltreatment during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency requirements. The Iowa DHS requires that caseworkers establish face-to-face contact with the children who are the subject of a maltreatment report in accordance with the following timeframes and circumstances:

- Immediate threat or high risk - 1 hour from receipt of the report.
- No immediate threat or high risk but alleged perpetrator has access to the child - 24 hours from receipt of the report.
- No immediate threat or high risk and alleged perpetrator does not have access to the child – 96 hours from receipt of the report.

The results of the case review assessments were the following:

- Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 11 (73%) of the 15 applicable cases (7 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 1 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 4 (27%) of the 15 applicable cases (2 of which were foster care cases).

Item 1 was rated as a Strength when face-to-face contact was established with the child within the required State timeframes. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when face-to-face contact was not established within required timeframes. Of the 4 cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement for this item, 2 cases should have been investigated within 24 hours ("moderate risk") and 2 cases should have been investigated within 96 hours ("low risk"). None of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement involved a maltreatment report classified as immediate or high risk.

Stakeholders commenting on the issue of timeliness of investigations expressed the opinion that the agency responds to child maltreatment reports in a timely manner. Stakeholders reported that the police and the child welfare agency collaborate in responding to maltreatment reports and that this collaboration is highly effective, particularly for investigations of physical and sexual abuse.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the finding that in 27 percent of the applicable cases, the agency had not established face-to-face contact with the child subject of a maltreatment report in accordance with the State's required time frames. A key finding was that when delays occurred, the reports did not involve immediate threat or high risk. According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa has some of the highest standards in the nation in terms of timeframes for responding to child abuse and neglect allegations.

## **Item 2. Repeat maltreatment**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

***Review Findings:*** The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 39 of the 50 cases. Eleven cases were not applicable because there was never a substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report on any of the children in the family. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether there had ever been a substantiated report on the family. Reviewers also were to determine if there was at least one substantiated maltreatment report during the period under review, and if so, if another substantiated or indicated report occurred within 6 months of that report. The results of the assessment were the following:

- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 37 (92%) of the 39 applicable cases (21 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 2 (8%) of the 39 applicable cases (1 of which was a foster care case).

Item 2 was rated as a Strength under the following circumstances:

- There was a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report involving the family prior to the period under review but no substantiated or indicated report during the period under review (31 cases).
- There was a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report involving the family during the period under review, but there was no substantiated or indicated report within 6 months of that report (5 cases).
- There were two substantiated reports within 6-months of one another, but they did not involve the same perpetrator or circumstances (1 case).

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 2 cases in which 2 substantiated reports occurred within 6 months of one another. In these cases, the perpetrator of the maltreatment was the same and the maltreatment involved similar circumstance.

Additional findings with respect to the frequency of maltreatment reports on the family prior to and during the period under review for all 50 cases were the following:

- In 6 cases, there was never a maltreatment report on the family.
- In 7 cases, there was 1 maltreatment report.
- In 28 cases, there were between 2 and 5 maltreatment reports.
- In 7 cases, there were between 6 and 10 maltreatment reports.
- In 2 cases, there were more than 10 maltreatment reports.

It is not known how many of these reports were substantiated.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue reported that the agency has an extensive array of services to prevent repeat maltreatment, including immediate crisis intervention services and in-home counseling. They also expressed the opinion that the convening of Family Team Meetings at the onset of a case is effective in reducing the incidence of repeat maltreatment. However, stakeholders also expressed concern that recent budget cuts will reduce the availability of in-home services and Family Team Meetings.

Some stakeholders suggested that the primary reason for repeat maltreatment is chronic neglect, and that this is due in large part to parental substance abuse, particularly methamphetamine abuse. Several stakeholders identified methamphetamine abuse as a critical problem in the State.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although in 92 percent of the applicable cases, the item was rated as a Strength, the State's rate of maltreatment recurrence for 2001 reported in the State Data Profile (11.2%) did not meet the national standard of 6.1 percent or less. The criteria and standard for both indicators must be met for the item to be rated as a Strength.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa's recurrence rate has been fairly constant at around 10 percent. The Statewide Assessment reports that analyses of recurrence data revealed that 53 percent of the repeat maltreatment occurs for children between 0 to 5 years, 31 percent for children age 6 to 11, and 15 percent for children age 12 to 18. The analyses also found that child neglect accounts for 75 percent of the incidence of maltreatment recurrence, physical abuse accounts for 12 percent, and sexual abuse accounts for 7 percent.

#### **Safety Outcome 2**

<b>Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.</b>
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<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>
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	<b>Linn (Cedar Rapids)</b>	<b>Polk (Des Moines)</b>	<b>Woodbury (Sioux City)</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	11	18	14	43	93.5
Partially Achieved:	1	1	0	2	4.3
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	1	0	1	2.2
Not Applicable:	2	2	0	4	

## **STATUS OF SAFETY OUTCOME 2**

Iowa achieved substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 93.5 percent of the cases reviewed, which meets the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity.

For the most part, case reviewers determined that DHS was effective in: (1) providing appropriate services to families to protect children in the home and prevent their removal, and (2) appropriately removing children from their homes when the potential risk of harm was too high for them to remain at home. Some stakeholders, however, expressed concern that in some cases the agency's assessment of risk is not sufficiently comprehensive to capture underlying problems in the family, particularly mental health issues.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

### **Item 3. Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal**

☒ **Strength**      ☐ **Area Needing Improvement**

**Review Findings:** There were 30 cases for which an assessment of item 3 was applicable. Twenty cases were excluded from this assessment because the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and/or there were no substantiated or indicated maltreatment reports or identified risks of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. For this item, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families to prevent removal of children from their homes while at the same time ensuring their safety. The result of this assessment was that item 3 was rated as a Strength in all 30 (100%) of the applicable cases (12 of which were foster care cases).

Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- Appropriate services were provided to the parents and child to prevent removal (16 cases).
- Appropriate services were provided to the family while the child was in a voluntary placement with a relative (3 cases).
- The family received appropriate post-reunification services to prevent re-entry into foster care (1 case).
- The children were appropriately removed from the home to ensure their safety (10 cases).

Services provided to the families included, but were not limited to, individual counseling, family counseling, play therapy, mental health counseling, psychiatric services, medication management, anger management, substance abuse treatment and counseling (including specialized day treatment), domestic violence services, parenting classes, in-home counseling and supervision, parental monitoring, individual skill building, home-skill development, casework management, day care, housing and utility assistance, educational services, and alternative schooling.

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that there is a large array of preventive and home-based services available to prevent children's removal from their homes or re-entry into foster care after reunification. Some stakeholders expressed concern, however, about the scarcity of substance abuse treatment services for parents and of services to support relative caregivers. Stakeholders in all counties indicated that recent budget cuts will further impact DHS' ability to provide services, particularly home-based services, to families.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 100 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that DHS had made diligent efforts to provide the necessary services to maintain children safely in their own homes or to remove children appropriately from their homes when the risk of harm warranted removal. This finding is consistent with information provided in the Statewide Assessment indicating that preventing the removal of children from their homes is a high priority for DHS.

#### **Item 4. Risk of harm to child**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

***Review Findings:*** An assessment of item 4 was applicable for 46 cases. Four cases were not applicable for assessment because they were not opened due to child maltreatment and there was no risk of harm to the child. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to reduce the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. The assessment resulted in the following findings:

- Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 43 (93%) of the 46 applicable cases (25 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 3 (7%) of the 46 applicable cases (2 of which were foster care cases).

Item 4 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The risk of harm to children was appropriately managed by removing the children from home either prior to or during the period under review and providing services to the parents to reduce risk of harm (17 cases).
- The risk of harm to children was appropriately managed by removing the children from the home either prior to or during the period under review and seeking termination of parental rights (TPR) (9 cases).
- The risk of harm to children was appropriately managed by providing services to families to address risk concerns while the children remained in the home (17 cases).

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- A maltreatment allegation was made after the child was returned to the mother's custody and the agency did not investigate the report (1 case).
- The child's behavior presented a risk of harm to himself/herself and the services offered were not sufficient to reduce this risk (2 cases).

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DHS is generally effective in addressing risk of harm to children and routinely conducts risk assessments and establishes safety plans. However, other stakeholders suggested that risk assessments were not sufficiently comprehensive to capture underlying issues that may contribute to risk of harm, such as domestic violence or mental illness. Stakeholders in Polk County, for example, voiced concern about the effectiveness of the risk assessment tool that is currently available to caseworkers and the extremely high caseloads that make it difficult for caseworkers to monitor families and assess risk on an ongoing basis. These stakeholders noted that because of large caseloads, the agency generally addresses risk by removing the children from home.

In addition, several stakeholders expressed concern about the potential for risk of harm to children in foster care. They suggested that some children may be at risk in foster homes because there are too many children in the home or because the children's needs have not been adequately matched with the foster family's ability to meet needs. Again, stakeholders indicated that caseworkers' caseloads are too high to effectively monitor foster families.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 93 percent of the applicable cases reviewers determined that DHS had made diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa policy requires ongoing safety assessments at various times in a case including (1) within 5 working days after case assignment, (2) whenever circumstances suggest that the child's safety may be in jeopardy, (3) when



considering commencement of unsupervised visits, (4) immediately before returning a child home, and (5) immediately before closing a service case. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DHS policy provides guidance regarding risk factors that may place a child in immediate danger of moderate to severe harm and that DHS currently is piloting a standardized safety assessment tool and a risk assessment tool to strengthen the safety assessment and planning processes.

## II. PERMANENCY

### Permanency Outcome 1

<b>Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Linn (Cedar Rapids)</b>	<b>Polk (Des Moines)</b>	<b>Woodbury (Sioux City)</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	3	5	6	14	50.0
Partially Achieved:	4	7	2	13	46.4
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	1	0	1	3.6
Not Applicable:	7	9	6	22	
<b>Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:</b>					
	<b>National Standard</b>	<b>State's Percentage</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Does Not Meet Standard</b>	
Foster care re-entries	8.6 or less	25.0		X	
Length of time to achieve reunification	76.2 or more	81.0	X		
Length of time to achieve adoption	32.0 or more	49.0	X		
Stability of foster care placements	86.7 or more	88.0	X		

### STATUS OF PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 50.0 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for fiscal year (FY) 2001, the State did not meet the national standard for the rate of foster care re-entries.

The FY 2001 data in the State Date Profile indicate that the State did meet the national standards for (1) the percentage of children who were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care, (2) the percentage of children who were discharged to finalized

adoptions within 24 months of entry into foster care, and (3) the percentage of children who experienced no more than 2 placements after having been in foster care for 12 months or less.

Performance on this outcome varied across sites included in the onsite CFSR. Reviewers determined that the outcome was substantially achieved in 75 percent of Woodbury County cases, compared to 42 percent of Linn County cases and 41 percent of Polk County cases.

A key finding of the case reviews was that five of the six indicators for Permanency Outcome 1 were rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Case reviewers determined that DHS was not consistently effective in (1) preventing children's re-entry into foster care, (2) ensuring children's placement stability while in foster care, (3) establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner, and (4) making diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. However, reviewers determined that DHS was effective in reunifying children in a timely manner.

Several stakeholders in Woodbury County expressed concern that attainment of permanency in that county often involved terminating parental rights "too quickly," particularly for Native American children and children whose parents are substance abusers. These stakeholders noted that in Woodbury County, if children cannot be returned to their parents at the 12-month permanency hearing, then, typically the court or county attorney seeks termination of parental rights (TPR) immediately.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 are presented below.

#### **Item 5. Foster care re-entries**

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** Ten of the 28 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of foster care re-entries because they involved children who entered foster care at some time during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The assessment resulted in the following findings:

- Item 5 was rated as a Strength in 6 (60%) of the 10 applicable cases.
- Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 4 (40%) of the 10 applicable cases.

Item 5 was rated as a Strength when a child's entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 4 cases because the child had one or more entries into foster care during the period under review that occurred within 12 months of a previous foster care episode. In three of these cases, the children were adolescents and the re-entry into foster care was due to a need for treatment or specialized services. In the fourth case, re-entry was due to the parent's relapse into substance abuse.

Some stakeholders commenting on this item attributed foster care reentries to premature reunifications and to a lack of post-reunification supports and services. Other stakeholders attributed re-entries into foster care to the parents' relapse of substance abuse, particularly methamphetamine use.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the following:

- In 40 percent of the applicable cases reviewed, children re-entered foster care within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode.
- The data from the State Data Profile indicate that Iowa's re-entry rate for FY 2001 (25%) did not meet the national standard of 8.6 percent or less.

According to the Statewide Assessment, children in Iowa have re-entered foster care at a rate of approximately 25 percent over the past 3 reporting periods (for reporting data to AFCARS). Information in the Statewide Assessment suggests that this rate may be due in part to a DHS program in which children have a very brief out-of-home placement to stabilize a family that is in crisis. These placements typically last 2 days to 2 weeks while treatment plans and supports are modified to meet the child's needs and prepare for return home. The children re-enter when it is determined that the child cannot be safely or appropriately maintained at home with the services in place.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that 60 percent of children re-entering foster care are placed in group care, 30 percent are placed in non-relative foster care, 5 percent in psychiatric medical institutions for children, and 5 percent are either placed in pre-adoptive homes, independent living facilities or have run away.

#### **Item 6. Stability of foster care placement**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** All 28 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of Item 6. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so, whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal or meet the child's service needs. The findings of this assessment were the following:

- Item 6 was rated as a Strength in 23 (82%) of the 28 applicable cases.
- Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 5 (18%) of the 28 applicable cases.

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 17 cases experienced only 1 placement during the period under review (no placement changes).
- Children in 5 cases experienced 2 placements during the period under review.
- Children in 5 cases experienced 3 placements during the period under review.
- The child in 1 case experienced 4 placements during the period under review.

Item 6 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child did not experience a placement change during the period under review (17 cases), or that the placement changes experienced were in the child's best interest (6 cases), such as moving a child from a foster home to a therapeutic setting or to a pre-adoptive placement.

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The child experienced multiple placement changes that were not for the purpose of meeting the child's needs or attaining the child's goals (4 cases).
- The child's current placement is not stable (1 case).

Stakeholders commenting on this issue expressed the opinion that most foster care children are in stable placements. However, several stakeholders attributed placement instability to the fact that children often are placed in emergency shelter care by law enforcement following an emergency removal. Although these are intended to be short-term stays, stakeholders reported that the length of stay in emergency shelters is increasing because of a lack of foster homes and a long waiting list for treatment facilities. A few stakeholders noted that placement instability is most common for older children in foster care and is due primarily to the child's behavioral or mental health issues.

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although data from the State Data Profile for FY 2001 indicate that the percentage of children experiencing no more than 2 placements in their first 12 months in foster care (88.8%) meets the national standard of 86.7 percent or more, in 18 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined

that children experienced multiple placement changes that did not promote attainment of their goals or meet their treatment needs. The criteria and standards for both indicators must be met for this item to be rated as a Strength.

According to the Statewide Assessment, most children in foster care in Iowa remain in foster care for less than 12 months and have fewer than 3 foster care placements during their foster care episode. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the longer children remain in foster care the more likely they are to experience frequent placement changes. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, children in foster care 12 to 23 months had on average 2 placements; when in care 24 to 35 months children had on average 4 placements; when in care 36 to 47 months children had on average 4 placements; and children in foster care more than 48 months had on average 6 placements.

#### **Item 7. Permanency goal for child**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** All 28 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 7. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner. The results of this assessment were the following:

- Item 7 was rated Strength in 21 (75%) of the 28 applicable cases.
- Item 7 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 7 (25%) of the 28 applicable cases.

The case review found that the children in the 28 foster care cases had the following permanency goals:

- 11 children had a goal of adoption.
- 4 children had a goal of “long-term foster care”/emancipation.
- 11 children had a goal of reunification.
- 1 child did not have a permanency goal.
- 1 child had a concurrent goal of emancipation and reunification.

At the time of the onsite review, 15 of the 28 children in the foster care cases had been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. TPR had been filed in 11 of these cases, and attained in 10. For the 4 cases for which TPR had not been filed, a reason for not filing had been entered in 2 of the case files, but in 2 case files, no reason was provided. In one case, TPR was filed and attained prior to the child being in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.

Item 7 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child's permanency goal was appropriate and had been established in a timely manner. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The goal is/was appropriate but was not established in a timely manner (3 cases).
- The goal is not appropriate given the needs of the child and the circumstances of the case (3 cases).
- There was no permanency goal established for the child (1 case).

Most stakeholders commenting on the issue of permanency planning reported that the agency and the courts emphasize establishing permanency early in a case and that concurrent planning is routinely used throughout the State. Some stakeholders, however, expressed the opinion that although concurrent planning may appear frequently in the case file, it does not always occur in practice. Stakeholders also noted that sometimes case goals do not appear in the files because the permanency goal is not a required field in the agency's information system.

With regard to the appropriateness of the permanency goal, several stakeholders reported that the use of Family Team Meetings or Alternative Dispute Resolution facilitates the establishment of appropriate permanency goals. However, many stakeholders also expressed concern that the permanency goal of adoption is being established before parents have sufficient opportunity to work toward reunification, particularly when parents are struggling with methamphetamine addiction and there are insufficient treatment services or post-treatment supportive services. Stakeholders noted that State law in Iowa requires that TPR is to be filed within 12 months of the child's entry into foster care. The court can grant one 6-month extension if it appears that reunification will be possible during that time period.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the finding that in 25 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not established an appropriate goal for the child in a timely manner. One concern raised by the case reviews is that, although DHS policy promotes concurrent planning, there was evidence of concurrent planning in only one of the cases reviewed.

According to the Statewide Assessment, in FY 2000, 26 percent of the children in foster care did not have an established case plan goal. In addition, the current management information system does not require that caseworkers enter a permanency goal in the automated case file, making it difficult to track case goals.

#### **Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement with Relatives**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** Item 8 was applicable for 12 of the 28 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives for children in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of this assessment were the following:

- Item 8 was rated as a Strength in 11 (92%) of the 12 applicable cases.
- Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 1 (8%) of the 12 applicable cases.

All 12 cases included in this assessment had a goal of reunification. The goal was achieved in 8 cases, and in 5 of those cases, the goal was achieved within 12 months. All 4 children who had not yet achieved the goal of reunification had been in foster care for less than 12 months by the end of the CFSR period under review.

Item 8 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency was making diligent efforts to reunify the child in a timely manner. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the agency had not made adequate efforts to achieve the goal of reunification.

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that DHS engages in several practices designed to facilitate reunification, including (1) use of Family Team Meetings, (2) periodic case reviews, and (3) intensive services and supports for families. However, stakeholders also cited a number of barriers to timely reunification such as (1) high caseworker caseloads, (2) a high number of inexperienced caseworkers who are not skilled in engaging families, (3) court continuances, and (4) out-of county placements that inhibit visitation.

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the following findings:

- Data from the State Data Profile indicate that for FY 2001, the percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of entry into foster care (81.1%) meets the national standard of 76.2 percent or more.
- Case reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner in 92 percent of the 12 applicable cases.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa legislation to establish a subsidized guardianship was withdrawn shortly after enactment due to State budget shortfalls. It was expected that such a program would have aided older children in attaining permanency and supported relative placements for children with special needs.

## Item 9. Adoption

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** Eleven of the 28 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 9. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. The results were the following:

- Item 9 was rated as a Strength in 6 (55%) of the 11 applicable cases.
- Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 5 (45%) of the 11 applicable cases.

Adoption was finalized during the CFSR period under review in 4 of the 11 cases in which the child had a goal of adoption. Although none of the finalizations occurred within 24 months of the child's entry into foster care, three finalizations occurred 25 to 26 months after entry into foster care. The fourth finalization involved a case in which a prior adoption had dissolved and the child re-entered foster care and was adopted again within 33 months of entry into foster care. Of the 7 remaining children, 5 were in adoptive placements.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the State had achieved a finalized adoption in a timely manner or that DHS was making concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that there were unnecessary agency-related delays pertaining to establishing the adoption goals in a timely manner, pursuing adoptive resources, and providing needed supportive services. Reviewers also noted that some delays were due to changing caseworkers and/or jurisdictions. At the time of the onsite CFSR, the length of stay in foster care for children in these cases ranged from 25 months to 5 years.

Stakeholders commenting on this topic were in general agreement that DHS makes concerted efforts to pursue adoptions. However, stakeholders also identified the following barriers to timely adoptions: (1) a backlog of home studies, (2) court continuances, (3) a lack of attorneys, (4) crowded court dockets that result in delays in hearings, (5) lengthy paternity searches, (6) lengthy judicial decision-making, (7) delays in assigning caseworkers, and (8) high caseworker caseloads.

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although data from the State Data Profile indicate that the State's percentage of finalized adoptions in FY 2001 occurring within 24 months of removal from home (49%) exceeds the national standard of 32.0 percent or more, reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to achieve an adoption in a timely manner in 45 percent of the 11 applicable cases reviewed. The criteria and standard for both measures must be met for the item to be rated as a Strength.



As noted in the Statewide Assessment, of all children exiting to adoption, 1 percent were under age 1, 50 percent were between age 1 and 5, 31 percent were between age 6 and 10, 15 percent were between age 11 and 15, and 3 percent were over age 16. The average age of all children who were adopted during the period is 7 years old. The average of length of stay in foster care for children exiting care to adoption is 27 months.

#### **Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** Five of the foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 10. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to other planned permanent living arrangements. The results were the following:

- Item 10 was rated as a Strength in 4 (80%) of the 5 applicable cases.
- Item 10 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 1 (20%) of the 5 applicable cases.

Item 10 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children were receiving appropriate services and the foster care placement was stable. In one case, the child achieved reunification prior to her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, but the caseworker had established a concurrent plan of emancipation to ensure that the child received services to prepare her for independent living if reunification did not occur. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the agency did not consider other permanency goals before establishing a goal of long-term foster care.

Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed concern that youth who are emancipated from foster care are not sufficiently prepared to make a successful transition from foster care to independent living. Stakeholders reported that there is a lack of long-term planning and services to help these youth. Several stakeholders said that independent living services often are not offered to youth until 3 months prior to their discharge from foster care. Moreover, independent living services for youth are severely limited due to resource constraints. One stakeholder characterized the agency's approach to independent living services for youth who will be emancipated from foster care as "too little, too late."

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in one (20%) of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to ensure that the child's placement was long-term and stable and that the child was receiving appropriate services.

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS requires documentation of other planned permanent living arrangement in the case plan. This documentation is expected to include the reasons why reunification, adoption, guardianship, or placement in the custody of a suitable person is not viable options for the child. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the 2002B AFCARS data indicate that 11 percent of Iowa children in foster care have a permanency goal of long-term foster care or other planned living arrangement. Sixty-one percent of children in foster care with this permanency goal are age 16 or older, 37 percent are age 11 to 15, and 2 percent are younger than age 10.

## **Permanency Outcome 2**

<b>Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Linn (Cedar Rapids)</b>	<b>Polk (Des Moines)</b>	<b>Woodbury (Sioux City)</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	6	9	8	23	82.1
Partially Achieved:	0	4	0	4	14.3
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	0	0	1	3.6
Not Applicable:	7	9	6	22	

## **STATUS OF PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2**

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 82.1 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

Performance on this outcome varied across the sites included in the onsite review. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 100 percent of Woodbury County cases, compared to 86 percent of Linn County cases, and 69 percent of Polk County cases.

Key CFSR findings indicate that DHS makes concerted efforts to (1) place children in close proximity to their families, (2) place siblings together in foster care, and (3) promote frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care. However, the CFSR also found a lack of consistent effort on the part of DHS to (1) seek and assess relatives as placement resources,

(2) preserve children's connections to their families and racial and religious heritage, and (3) support or promote the parent child relationship.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 2 are presented below.

### **Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement**

☒ Strength                      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** Of the 28 foster care cases, 20 were applicable for an assessment of item 11. Cases determined to be not applicable were those in which (1) TPR had been attained prior to the period under review, (2) contact with parents was not considered to be in the child's best interest, and/or (3) parents were deceased or whereabouts were unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child's most recent foster care setting was in close proximity to the child's parents or close relatives. This assessment resulted in the following results:

- Item 11 was rated as a Strength in 19 (95%) of the 20 applicable cases.
- Item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 1 (5%) of the 20 applicable cases.

Item 11 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed in the same community as parents or relatives (12 cases).
- The child's out-of-county placement was necessary to meet the child's needs (7 cases).

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case because reviewers determined that the out-of-county placement was not necessary to meet the child's treatment needs.

Stakeholders commenting on this item were in general agreement that most children are placed in close proximity to their parents or relatives. However, a few stakeholders noted that when children in some areas of the State require residential treatment, they often must be placed 30 or 40 miles away from their families.

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 95 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that DHS had made diligent efforts to ensure that children were placed in foster care placements that were in close proximity to their parents or relatives, or were necessary to meet special needs.

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS require that proximity to parents be considered in placement decisions. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that proximity of placements may be an area where improvement is needed.

## **Item 12. Placement with siblings**

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** Sixteen of the 28 foster care cases involved a child with siblings who were in foster care. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were, or had been, placed together and, if not, whether the separation was necessary to meet the needs (service or safety needs) of one or more of the children. This assessment resulted in the following findings:

- Item 12 was rated as a Strength in 14 (88%) of the 16 applicable cases.
- Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 2 (12%) of the 16 applicable cases.

In 11 of the 16 applicable cases, the child was in a placement with at least one other sibling, and in 9 of those cases, the child was in a placement with all siblings.

Item 12 was rated as a Strength if the child was in placement with all of his or her siblings (9 cases), or if reviewers determined that the separation of the siblings was necessary to meet at least one child's safety or treatment needs (5 cases). The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the separation of siblings was due to a lack of sufficient placement resources.

Most stakeholders commenting on the issue of placement with siblings expressed the opinion that DHS makes diligent efforts to place children with their siblings. However, several stakeholders suggested that there is a need for more foster homes that can accommodate sibling groups.

**Determination and Discussion:** This item was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that in 88 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that DHS makes diligent efforts to place siblings together in foster care whenever possible.

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS policy requires that efforts are made to place siblings together unless to do so would be detrimental to the physical, emotional, or mental well being of one of the children. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that there is a scarcity of placement resources that can accommodate large sibling groups.

### Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** An assessment of item 13 was applicable for 20 of the 28 foster care cases. Eight cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item because TPR had been established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the children's lives or parental visitation was terminated by court order and the child had no siblings in foster care. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine (1) whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings in foster care and (2) whether these visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The findings of this assessment were the following:

- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 17 (85%) of the 20 applicable cases.
- Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 3 (15%) of the 20 applicable cases.

Typical visitation between children and their mothers for the 19 cases for which this assessment was applicable was the following:

- Weekly visits – 14 cases.
- Twice a month visits - 1 case.
- Monthly visits – 1 case.
- Less than monthly visits - 2 cases.
- No visits – 1 case.

In one of three cases in which visits with mother occurred less frequently than once a month, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to promote more frequent visitation.

Typical visitation between children and their fathers for the 12 cases for which this assessment was applicable was the following:

- Weekly visits – 4 cases.
- Less than monthly visits – 2 cases.
- No visits – 6 cases.

In five of the eight cases in which visits with father occurred less frequently than once a month, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to promote more frequent visitation.

Visitation between siblings was applicable in 4 cases in which siblings were not placed together in foster care. Typical visitation between siblings was the following:

- Less than monthly visits - 2 cases.

- No visits – 2 cases.

For the two cases for which visitation between siblings were less than monthly, the siblings were runaways during part of the period under review and their whereabouts were unknown. For the two cases in which there were no visits between siblings, visitation was not in the child's best interest in one case, and in the other case, reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to promote visitation.

Item 13 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency of visitation met the needs of the child and parent, or that, when visitation was less frequent than needed, DHS had made diligent efforts to promote more frequent visitation and, in some instances, provided alternative forms of contact, such as telephone and e-mail.

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that DHS did not arrange for regular visitation with a parent and/or did not arrange for other types of contact when regular visitation was not possible.

Some stakeholders commenting on this item reported that the frequency of parents' visitation with children has been negatively impacted by caseworkers' extremely high caseloads, which makes it difficult for them to supervise visits. Stakeholders in one county noted that this problem is exacerbated by the fact that some foster parents are hesitant to have contact with biological parents during visitation due to safety concerns. In addition, although some stakeholders noted that visitation with siblings is encouraged, others reported that sibling visits rarely occur (e.g., twice a year).

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 85 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that DHS made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation between parents and children and between siblings was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the child. However, information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that DHS believes that visitation is not as frequent as it should be because the high caseloads of agency caseworkers do not permit them to supervise visits and because funding to pay for supervision by private contractors has become increasingly unavailable.

#### **Item 14. Preserving connections**

\_\_\_\_\_ Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** Item 14 was applicable for assessment in all 28 foster care cases. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child's connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care. The assessment resulted in the following findings:

- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 22 (79%) of the 28 applicable cases.
- Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 6 (21%) of the 28 applicable cases.

Ratings for this item tended to vary across counties with the item rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Woodbury County cases and 83 percent of Linn County cases, compared to 62 percent of Polk County cases.

Reviewers indicated that in 18 of the 28 cases, children's primary connections had been “significantly” preserved while they were in foster care; in 7 of the 28 cases, children’s primary connections had been “partially” preserved; and in 3 of the 28 cases, children’s primary connections had been “not at all” preserved.

Item 14 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to achieve one or more of the following:

- Preservation of child’s primary connections with extended family members (11 cases).
- Preservation of child’s primary connections with school and community (8 cases).
- Preservation of child’s primary connections with religion and ethnic/racial heritage (9 cases).

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to preserve the child's connections with extended family members (4 cases) and school and community (2 cases). In one of those cases, reviewers noted that the agency also had not made efforts to preserve the child’s connection with her ethnic heritage.

Two children in the cases reviewed were identified as Native American children (both in Woodbury County). In both cases, reviewers determined that the agency had notified the Tribe in a timely manner; in one case, the child was placed with relatives. This item was rated as a Strength in both cases.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue expressed the opinion that although DHS is generally effective in preserving connections to family and schools, it is less consistently successful in preserving children’s connections to their ethnic/racial heritage and religion. In addition, several stakeholders, mostly in Woodbury County, indicated that DHS is not always consistent with regard to compliance with the requirements of ICWA regarding notification of Tribes when a Native American child is brought into foster care. Woodbury County stakeholders noted that Native American children often are not placed with Native American families, even when Native American families are available in nearby counties or States.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 21percent of the cases, reviewers determined that DHS had not made diligent efforts to preserve children's connections. A key concern identified by case reviewers was that DHS is not consistent in its efforts to promote or maintain children’s connections with extended family

members. A key concern identified by stakeholders was that DHS is not consistent in adhering to ICWA requirements with regard to maintaining children's connections with their Native American heritage, although this concern was not evident in the two cases reviewed in which children were identified as Native American.

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS has a strong philosophy regarding preserving children's connections while they are in foster care. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that the need for consistent practice in preserving continuity of family relationships and connections is an opportunity for agency improvement. In addition, the State is aware of existing problems in relationships with the Tribes and is actively pursuing better coordination with the Native American community to enhance their compliance with the ICWA.

### **Item 15. Relative placement**

\_\_\_\_\_ Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** Twenty-two of the 28 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 15. Cases were not applicable for assessment of this item when children were placed in foster care for the purpose of receiving specialized treatment such as mental health hospitalization or inpatient substance abuse treatment. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives (both maternal and paternal relatives) as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of this assessment were the following:

- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 17 (77%) of the 22 applicable cases.
- Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 5 (23%) of the 22 applicable cases.

Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable Woodbury County cases, compared to 70 percent of applicable Polk County cases, and 67 percent of applicable Linn County cases.

Item 15 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children were placed with relatives (2 cases) or that the agency had made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives (15 cases). Relatives were "ruled out" as potential placement resources when they were unable or unwilling to care for the children, had a criminal record, or had a history of substantiated child maltreatment.

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to search for paternal relatives (2 cases) or for either paternal or maternal relatives (3 cases).



Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that DHS makes concerted efforts to seek relatives as potential placement resources. Some stakeholders noted that the use of Family Team Meetings has increased placements of children with relatives. However, Woodbury County stakeholders voiced concern that the courts and county attorney in that county are not routinely supportive of placing children with relatives and do not usually perceive relatives as appropriate placement options, although this concern was not apparent in the cases reviewed.

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 23 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that DHS had not made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources.

Information provided in the Statewide Assessment indicates that Iowa has a low rate of placement with relatives. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that the State information system only collects information on relative placements that are licensed as foster parents. Non-licensed relative placements are not in the information system because the relative has custody of the child, not DHS.

#### **Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents**

\_\_\_\_\_ Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** An assessment of item 16 was applicable for 19 of the 28 foster care cases. A case was considered not applicable for an assessment of this item if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child or if a relationship with the parents was considered to be not in the child's best interests. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care with their mothers and fathers. The results of this assessment were the following:

- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 15 (79%) of the 19 applicable cases.
- Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 4 (21%) of the 19 applicable cases.

Item 16 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined one or more of the following

- The agency promoted the parent child relationship by facilitating and encouraging frequent visitation and providing transportation for visitation when necessary (10 cases).
- The agency promoted the parent child relationship by involving parents in the child's medical appointments (3 cases).
- The agency promoted the parent child relationship by involving parents with the child in recreational and school activities (2 cases).

- The agency promoted the parent child relationship by providing family counseling (1 case).

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency did not promote parental involvement with the child or attempt to strengthen the parent-child relationship through other activities. In one of the four cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement, reviewers determined that the agency did not attempt to locate the parents in another country, even though the location of the parents was in the case file. In the other three cases, reviewers determined that the agency had not made sufficient efforts to promote the father-child relationship (2 cases) or improve the mother-child bond (1 case).

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because reviewers determined that in 21 percent of the applicable cases, the agency had not made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care.

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS has many policies and practices designed to maintain the relationship of children in care with their parents.

### III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

#### Well-Being Outcome 1

<b>Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Linn (Cedar Rapids)</b>	<b>Polk (Des Moines)</b>	<b>Woodbury (Sioux City)</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	4	3	5	12	24.0
Partially Achieved:	8	13	6	27	54.0
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	6	3	11	22.0
Not Applicable:	0	0	0	0	

## **STATUS OF WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1**

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved for 24.0 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

A key finding relevant to this outcome was that in a large percentage of cases, the frequency and quality of face-to-face contact between DHS caseworkers and children and parents in their caseloads were determined to be insufficient to meet the needs of children or to promote goal attainment. Case reviewers found that the lack of adequate contact between caseworkers and children resulted in caseworkers being unaware of important information and/or events in the children's lives. For example, in one case, the caseworker was not aware that an adolescent in foster care had graduated from high school and thought that he was a junior in high school. In another case, the caseworker thought that the child had supervised visits with his sibling, but he did not. In another case, the caseworker did not know that the child had frequent visits with her biological mother, although the mother's parental rights had been terminated.

Information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that the State expected the onsite CFSR to identify caseworker contacts with children and parents as areas needing improvement. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, severe budget cuts have significantly reduced the number of staff, which has adversely impacted the ability of caseworkers to establish contact with parents and children.

Case reviewers also determined that DHS was not consistently effective in assessing and meeting the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents or in involving children and parents in the case-planning process. Stakeholders reported that use of some form of family group decision making results in greater involvement of parents and children in case planning, but that caseworkers are not using this format on a consistent basis, primarily because of their excessively high caseloads.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

### **Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents**

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** An assessment of item 17 was applicable for all 50 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had (1) adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents; and (2) provided the services necessary to meet those needs. The results were the following:

- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 36 (72%) of the 50 applicable cases (20 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 14 (28%) of the 50 applicable cases (8 of which were foster care cases).

Ratings for this item did not differ as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services). However, the item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 41 percent of Polk County cases, compared to only 21 percent of Woodbury County cases and 14 percent of Linn County cases.

Item 17 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the foster care cases (8) when reviewers determined the following:

- Lack of assessment of services needs and services to foster parents (2 cases).
- Incomplete assessment or no assessment of the needs of the children and parents so that many needs were not addressed (2 cases).
- Adequate assessments but a lack of services provided to children and/or parents to address identified needs (4 cases).

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the in-homes services cases (6) when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Mother's needs were not fully assessed either initially or on an ongoing basis (1 case).
- Children's needs were not fully assessed either initially or on an ongoing basis (6 cases).
- Identified needs were not addressed by services (3 cases).

Stakeholders commenting on this item were in general agreement that the current assessment process is fragmented and insufficient. Several stakeholders noted that DHS is addressing this problem through implementing a new safety/risk assessment tool that is currently being piloted in selected sites. Some stakeholders also reported that services are fragmented for some ethnic populations and not always individualized to address the specific needs of the family. However, stakeholders indicated that when some form of family group decision making is used, assessments are more comprehensive and family focused.

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 28 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that DHS had not adequately assessed and/or addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. A key concern identified for both foster care and in-home services cases pertained to a lack of assessment or an inadequate assessment of the family with respect to service needs.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Quality Service Reviews conducted by State indicate that 68 percent of the cases reviewed had excellent to fair assessments of need. The areas needing improvement identified through the State reviews were (1) assessments that focused on underlying needs rather than symptoms, and (2) information sharing among team members.

#### **Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** An assessment of item 18 was applicable for all 50 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents (including pre-adoptive parents or permanent caregivers) and children (if age-appropriate) had been involved in the case planning, and if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child's best interest. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child had actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. This assessment produced the following findings:

- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 33 (66%) of the 50 applicable cases (20 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 18 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 17 (34%) of the 50 applicable cases (8 of which were foster care cases).

Ratings for this item varied as a function of type of case and across sites included in the CFSR. A rating of Strength was assigned to 71 percent of the foster care cases compared to 59 percent of the in-home services cases. In addition, the item was rated as a Strength in 79 percent of Linn and Woodbury County cases, compared to 50 percent of Polk County cases.

Item 18 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Fathers who should have been involved in case planning were not involved (8 cases).
- Mothers who should have been involved in case planning were not involved (12 cases).
- Children who were old enough to have been involved in case planning were not involved (14 cases).

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that parents and children are more likely to be involved in case planning when some form of family group decision making is used in developing the case plan than they are when this approach to case planning is not implemented. Other stakeholders suggested that the extent of family involvement varies by caseworker. All stakeholders were in agreement that the caseloads carried by most caseworkers, particularly caseworkers in Polk County, are too excessive to permit the caseworker to actively engage parents and children in case planning.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the finding that in 34 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that DHS had not made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process.

This determination is consistent with information in the Statewide Assessment that involvement of parents and children in case planning is an area needing improvement. Quality Service Reviews (QSR) conducted by the State identified several barriers to family involvement in case planning including caseload size and frequent changes in DHS and provider staff.

#### **Item 19. Caseworker visits with child**

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

***Review Findings:*** All 50 cases were applicable for an assessment of item 19. In conducting this assessment, reviewers were to determine whether the frequency of visits between the caseworkers and children was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child's safety and well-being and whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. The results of the assessment were the following:

- Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 5 (10%) of the 50 applicable cases (2 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 45 (90%) of the 50 applicable cases (26 of which were foster care cases).

Reviewers noted the following with respect to frequency of caseworker visits with children for the 28 foster care cases:

- In 2 cases, visits typically occurred once a month.
- In 26 cases, visits typically occurred less than monthly.

Reviewers noted the following with respect to frequency of caseworker visits with children for the 22 in-home services cases:

- In 1 case, visits typically occurred once a month.
- In 18 cases, visits typically occurred less than monthly.
- In 3 cases, no visits were made.

Item 19 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child's safety and well-being and promote attainment of case goals.

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The caseworker did not visit the child during the period under review (3 cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child and the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (12 cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, but when visits did occur, they focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (30 cases).

Stakeholders commenting on this issue were in general agreement that caseworkers are not visiting children often enough, although they noted that when there is a crisis, such as a threatened disruption of a foster care placement, caseworkers will visit the child and the foster family. Stakeholders also were in agreement that irregular visitation is the consequence of high caseworker case loads due to budget cuts. It was reported that caseworkers in one county have as many as 35 to 40 cases at a time. Because they do not have time to visit children, caseworkers tend to rely on other forms of contact or information provided by contracted service providers. Interviews with stakeholders also revealed that DHS personnel have conflicting perceptions of the visitation requirements and that there appears to be no clear policy pertaining to caseworker visits with children.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the finding that in 90 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were not of sufficient frequency and/or quality to ensure children's safety and attainment of case goals. Information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that the State expects this issue to be a focus for improvement in the future.

## **Item 20. Caseworker visits with parents**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

***Review Findings:*** An assessment of item 20 was applicable for 48 of the 50 cases. There were two foster care cases that were not applicable for this assessment because TPR had been attained for the parents prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of the children and there were no adoptive parents. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker's face-to-face contact with the children's mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and/or ensure the children's safety and well being. The results of this assessment were the following:

- Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 11 (23%) of the 48 cases (3 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 37 (77%) of the 48 cases (23 of which were foster care cases).

Typical patterns of caseworker visits with mothers were the following (41 applicable cases):

- Twice a month visits - 2 cases (1 of which was a foster care case).
- Monthly visits – 7 cases (3 of which were foster care cases).
- Less than monthly visits – 31 cases (15 of which were foster care cases).
- No visits – 1 case (which was a foster care case).

Typical patterns of caseworker visits with fathers were the following (27 applicable cases):

- Monthly visits - 4 cases (none of which were foster care cases).
- Less than monthly visits - 20 cases (10 of which were foster care cases).
- No visits – 3 cases (2 of which were foster care cases).

Item 20 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Visits were not occurring with sufficient frequency, but when they did occur they focused on substantive issues pertaining to the case (26 cases).
- Visits were not occurring with sufficient frequency, nor did they focus on substantive issues pertaining to the case (10 cases).
- Visits were occurring with sufficient frequency, but did not focus on substantive issues pertaining to the case (1 case).

Stakeholders commenting on the issue of caseworker contacts with parents were in general agreement that caseworkers generally do not have regular face-to-face contact with parents in either foster care cases or in-home services cases. Most stakeholders suggested that the excessive caseloads carried by caseworkers prohibit them from visiting parents as frequently as is necessary to further attainment of case goals. However, stakeholders also noted that the parents often have contact with various service providers and that the caseworkers rely on information from these service providers to supplement information obtained through their own contacts.



**Determination and Discussion:** Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 77 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and/or quality of caseworker visits with parents were not sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. This determination is consistent with information in the Statewide Assessment indicating that, due to budget cuts, the number of trained staff is inadequate to ensure that caseworker contacts with parents can occur with the necessary frequency.

## Well-Being Outcome 2

<b>Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Linn (Cedar Rapids)</b>	<b>Polk (Des Moines)</b>	<b>Woodbury (Sioux City)</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	13	15	10	38	92.7
Partially Achieved:	0	0	0	0	0
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	2	1	3	7.3
Not Applicable:	1	5	3	9	

## STATUS OF WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2

Iowa achieved substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 based on the finding that 92.7 percent of the cases reviewed were determined to have substantially achieved this outcome, which meets the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

The CFSR found that DHS made concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs and provide appropriate services to meet those needs. Stakeholders in all counties agreed that the positive and productive collaboration between DHS and the schools allows the agency to be effective in meeting children's educational needs.

The findings for the item assessed for Well Being Outcome 2 are presented below.

### Item 21. Educational needs of the child

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** An assessment of item 21 was applicable for 41 of the 50 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable for assessment were those in which the children were not of school age or did not have needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether services were provided to meet those needs. The results of this assessment were the following:

- Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 38 (93%) of the 41 applicable cases (25 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 3 (7%) of the 41 applicable cases (1 of which was a foster care case).

Item 21 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all potential educational needs were assessed and addressed as appropriate. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two in-home services cases when reviewers determined that children had education-related needs that were not addressed. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in a third case because the child did not receive educational testing prior to a placement in a residential facility in another State, which resulted in a deterioration in the child's school performance.

Stakeholders in all counties agreed that the positive collaboration between DHS and the schools allows the agency to effectively meet children's educational needs. Stakeholders also reported that the agency works to maintain children in the same school, and in one county, the schools will provide transportation to support this effort. Some stakeholders also commented that the agency's use of alternative school programs has been effective in meeting children educational needs.

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 93 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that DHS had made diligent efforts to meet children's educational needs. According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa has a strong history of good educational programs, and those strengths benefit children in foster care. This is despite the fact that the resources for both agencies have been subjected to budget cuts.

### Well-Being Outcome 3

<b>Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.</b>					
<b>Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:</b>					
	<b>Linn (Cedar Rapids)</b>	<b>Polk (Des Moines)</b>	<b>Woodbury (Sioux City)</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	11	15	11	37	78.7
Partially Achieved:	1	6	2	9	19.1
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	0	0	1	2.2
Not Applicable:	1	1	1	3	

### STATUS OF WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 78.7 percent of the 47 applicable cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

Although the individual items pertaining to this outcome were rated as a Strength for the State, there were an insufficient number of cases in which both items were rated as a Strength. That is, in some cases, the agency was consistently effective in addressing children's physical health issues, but not their mental health service needs, and in some cases, the opposite was true.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 3 are presented and discussed below

#### Item 22. Physical health of the child

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** An assessment of item 22 was applicable for 38 of the 50 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable for this assessment were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether (1) children's physical health needs had been appropriately assessed; and (2) the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided. The findings of this assessment were the following:

- Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 34 (89%) of the 38 applicable cases (23 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 4 (11%) of the 38 applicable cases (all of which were foster care cases).

Item 22 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children's health needs were routinely assessed and services provided as needed. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Children had dental needs that were not met (1 case).
- Children did not have health screening at entry into foster care (2 cases).
- The child did not receive preventative health care while in shelter care for several months (1 case)

Stakeholders commenting on this item were in general agreement that DHS is effective in meeting children's physical health needs, although it was noted that there are widespread difficulties finding Medicaid providers for dental services. Stakeholders in one county also reported recent difficulties accessing vision care because providers do not want to accept Medicaid payments.

**Determination and Discussion:** Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that in 87 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that DHS adequately addressed the health needs of children in both the foster care and in-home services cases.

### **Item 23. Mental health of the child**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

**Review Findings:** An assessment of item 23 was applicable for 44 of the 50 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were foster care cases in which the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or mental health needs were not the reason for agency contact with the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether (1) mental health needs had been appropriately assessed, and (2) appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The findings of this assessment were the following:

- Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 38 (86%) of the 44 applicable cases (21 of which were foster care cases).
- Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 6 (14%) of the 44 applicable cases (4 of which were foster care cases).

Reviewers determined that children's mental health needs were "significantly" assessed in 41 cases, and "partially" assessed in 3 cases. Reviewers determined that identified mental health service needs were "significantly met" in 34 cases, "partially met" in 6 cases, "not at all met" in 2 cases, and there were no identified mental health needs in 2 cases.

Item 23 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children's mental health needs were "significantly" or "partially" assessed, and mental health needs were significantly addressed when necessary.

The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were not fully assessed (2 in-home services cases and 1 foster care case).
- Mental health needs were assessed but needed services were not provided or were ended prematurely (3 foster care cases).

Stakeholders commenting on this item reported that there are waiting lists for services for children and limits for length of treatment. They identified mental health services gaps with regard to psychiatric services, substance abuse treatment, and mental health assessments for children in foster care. Stakeholders also noted that it was difficult to address children's mental health needs because mental health providers do not attend case staffings or appear in court hearings because their time is not "reimbursable" for these activities. Some State-level stakeholders also reported that some parents can only get mental health treatment for their children if their children enter the Juvenile Justice system.

***Determination and Discussion:*** Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that in 86 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that DHS has made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. According to the Statewide Assessment, children in foster care in Iowa are enrolled in the State-managed mental health plan to address mental health needs. This ensures that children have access to in-patient services when needed. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that participants in focus groups convened by the State reported that there is a lack of available out-patient services, particularly in rural areas of Iowa.

## SECTION 2: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

### IV. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3X	4

Iowa achieved substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. Information pertaining to the item addressed for this factor is provided below.

**Item 24. State is operating a Statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding months, has been) in foster care.**

    X     Strength             Area Needing Improvement

This item is rated as a Strength because Iowa's child welfare information system (CWIS) meets standards for identifying the status, demographic characteristics, and location of children in foster care.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa has a fully operational statewide SACWIS called the Child Welfare Information System (CWIS). CWIS can determine the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for all children in foster care in the State. There have been two Federal SACWIS compliance reviews of CWIS, and the State is in the final stages of Federal review for SACWIS acceptance.

SACWIS has two major components, Family and Children's Services (FACS) and Statewide Tracking and Reporting (STAR). FACS is the child welfare case management and payment system for the agency. It applies to children in foster care and collects demographic data, caseworker information, household composition, services provided, current status and status history, and permanency goals, among other information. STAR is responsible for tracking the intake, assessment and findings for child abuse investigations. The STAR system collects information regarding abuse reports, report decisions, reporter, alleged perpetrator,

caseworker, dates of parental notification, appeal data, final disposition of assessment, and completion time frames for individuals receiving child protective services.

Information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that a survey of DHS staff regarding CWIS resulted in varying opinions.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements:

- The FACS information system allows me to identify, track, and report information on children and families.
- The STAR information system allows me to identify, track, and report information on child abuse assessments.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the “average” response fell somewhere between “somewhat effective” and “somewhat ineffective.”

The Statewide Assessment also reports that participants in DHS staff focus groups convened as part of the State’s self-assessment process, expressed the following opinions about CWIS:

- The system is effective in tracking payments but not in accessing information on which to base case decisions.
- The information is not readily available in a useful format.
- There is too little case-specific information for decision-making purposes.
- The system is antiquated and difficult to learn.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that funding for staff dedicated to the information system has been cut by 40 percent in the last year. In addition, there has been no funding for information system improvement and change for the past several years, and maintenance of the existing system has been a struggle because of lack of funding.

Stakeholders interviewed about the statewide information system during the onsite CFSR expressed opinions similar to those reported in the Statewide Assessment. There was general agreement among stakeholders that CWIS meets Federal requirements and can identify key information on children in foster care. However, stakeholders also noted that the child’s permanency goal is not a required field in the system, and therefore, the system may not be useful for tracking permanency goals.

Stakeholders expressed concern that, because of recent budget cuts, the focus of data analysis and reporting in CWIS has been limited to federally-required data and Federal outcomes. Consequently, agency administrators do not routinely receive the kinds of reports they need for effective management and case decision-making. All stakeholders commenting on this issue agreed that budget cuts have devastated the agency’s CWIS data analysis and research efforts. As a result, although there is a great deal of information in FACS, the agency cannot produce reports that provide useful analyses of the information.

Stakeholders at the local levels reported that FACS is most useful for tracking payments and services. They also noted that the system provides useful alerts regarding court reports, hearings, and visitation. However, several stakeholders indicated that the number of alerts (as many as 80) makes it difficult for caseworkers to focus on the key ones and that some of the alerts are not useful or necessary.

A major concern voiced by stakeholders pertained to the inability of caseworkers to share or access information across counties. Caseworkers said that they cannot see placement information for children in other counties. Other concerns reported by stakeholders were the following:

- The system is not very user friendly.
- There are concerns that information may not be routinely updated in a timely manner, particularly for in-home services cases.
- Training on how to use FACS as supervisor or case management tool has been limited.
- Juvenile Justice does not have access to FACS.
- STARS does not include CPS information on abuse and neglect histories prior to establishing the system and caseworkers still have to access the old system to obtain that information on families.

Although the agency is aware of the problems with CWIS, the State-level stakeholders reported that the system lacks resources to respond to requests for improvements

## V. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

The State is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System.

**Item 25. Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions.**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement



Item 25 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement because case plans are not consistently developed jointly with the child's parents.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa meets the requirement that each child in foster care has a written case plan with all the required elements. The Statewide Assessment also notes that case permanency plans are expected to be based on a functional assessment and reflect the views and preferences of the family.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, information obtained from focus groups convened by the State indicates that stakeholders agree that although all children have a case plan, many of the case plans are not developed in partnership with the family. Focus group participants also expressed the opinion that the case plans are too complicated, not family friendly, and designed to meet Federal regulations rather than serve as a working document that provides a road map for families and professionals. The Statewide Assessment reports that DHS, in response to the concerns voiced by stakeholders, implemented a new simplified case plan for intact families (i.e., cases in which the family receives services while children remain in their homes) in September 2002. The case plan for children in out-of-home placement is being revised based on the feedback (which has been mostly positive) on the intact family case plan.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that in some services areas, the agency is using Family Team Meetings (FTM), or some form of family group decision-making, to promote family involvement in case planning. The State is considering the possibility of implementing a FTM process on a statewide basis. The Statewide Assessment, however, notes that DHS staff identified the following barriers to the FTM process: (1) lack of staff time, (2) the difficulties of scheduling the meetings, (3) the time-intensive nature of the FTMs, which range from 20 minutes to 6 hours.

Stakeholders commenting on case plans and on the case-planning process during the onsite CFSR were in general agreement that the vast majority of children have a case plan. However, there was variation across counties with respect to the involvement of parents in the case planning process. In Linn County, where FTM appears to be used on a regular basis, stakeholders indicated that the family is usually involved in case planning and that DHS only develops a plan without the family's input if the family chooses not to participate in a FTM. In Woodbury and Polk counties, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that parents are involved, while others said that usually, they are not involved.

Stakeholders in all three counties expressed the opinion that parents tend to be fully involved in case planning in those cases in which some type of family group decision-making process is used. However, stakeholders also suggested that many caseworkers are not using family group decision making because of the time constraints imposed by their excessive caseloads (caseloads were reported as including anywhere from 35 to 55 cases depending on the county and/or the caseworker). State-level stakeholders reported that family

group decision making is strong in some sites, particularly those that are Community Partnership sites, and that the State has made training in family group decision making available for the last 5 years. However, stakeholders voiced concern that the training will not be useful unless caseloads are reduced so that caseworkers have the time to arrange and participate in the meetings.

Stakeholders also expressed varying opinions regarding the new case plan form. While most stakeholders suggested that the form is an improvement over the prior one, a few reported that it is not really family-friendly and is not a useful tool for developing individualized case plans.

**Item 26. Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.**

☒X\_\_\_ Strength     \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 was rated as a Strength because the State implements court reviews, Foster Care Review Board Reviews, and administrative reviews, all of which fulfill the requirement of a review of the status of each child no less frequently than once every 6 months.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa State policy requires that children in foster care have their cases reviewed every 6 months. These reviews must determine the child's safety, the continuing necessity and appropriateness of placement, the extent of compliance with the case plan, progress made and a likely date for reunification, adoption or guardianship. The Statewide Assessment also notes that there are three options for foster care permanency reviews – a court hearing, a Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) review, and, less frequently, a DHS administrative review. DHS reviews are conducted only if the case has not had a court or FCRB review. State policy requires that all reviews must be open to parents, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers with notice and adequate opportunity to be heard.

Information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that court reviews are held in a timely fashion and are effective. Judges included in a focus group expressed the opinion that the court's 6-month review is more effective than relying on FCRB or DHS administrative reviews, although they noted that the effectiveness is dependent on the judge's familiarity with the case and their responsibilities in juvenile cases. The Statewide Assessment also reports that DHS staff members believe that the DHS administrative reviews are less effective than court reviews but more effective than FCRB reviews in helping them achieve safety and permanency for the children in their cases. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the consistency of reviews is supported by a strong Court Improvement Project that provides standardized training for judges and annual training for attorneys. Another factor identified in the Statewide Assessment

as promoting consistent and timely reviews is the strong commitment by Juvenile Court Judges to their role in ensuring the safety and permanency for children in foster care.

Stakeholders participating in the onsite CFSR were in agreement that most 6-month reviews are conducted by the courts and that the courts review cases at least every 6 months, and even more frequently in many locations. Stakeholders in one county reported that court reviews are routinely conducted every 4 months. Stakeholders commented that a practice that is particularly effective in ensuring timely reviews involves setting the court date for the next review at the end of every review. Some stakeholders expressed concern about the brevity of the court reviews and hearings because there is insufficient docket time for longer hearings. Other stakeholders, however, reported that the court reviews are thorough.

Stakeholders noted that in counties in which there is a FCRB, the reviews tend to be held by both the FCRB and the Court. This was seen by some stakeholders as duplicative and as putting an unnecessary burden on the caseworkers. However, a few stakeholders reported that the FCRB review, which usually lasts about 50 minutes, is more comprehensive than the court review, which is rarely longer than 15 minutes.

Stakeholders noted that DHS reviews, which are held only if the court review is not held, provide caseworkers and supervisors with a good opportunity to staff the case and review progress in an informal, non-threatening setting.

**Item 27. Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 was rated as a Strength because the State has a process in place for conducting permanency reviews and the reviews are held in a timely manner consistent with Federal requirements.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa has policy and prescribed procedures to ensure that permanency hearings for children in foster care occur within the set time frames. Permanency hearings are held within 12 months of children entering foster care unless the courts have waived reasonable efforts requirements, in which case the permanency hearings are held within 30 days of the date the requirements were waived. FACS, which is a part of the CWIS, has a “flag” to alert individual caseworkers that it is time to request a petition for a permanency hearing. The alert is given 2 months prior to the time that the hearing is to be held. The Statewide

Assessment reports, however, that DHS does not have the staff capacity to monitor compliance with timelines for permanency hearings.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, various participants in focus groups convened as part of the State's self-assessment process, reported that there has been substantial progress in meeting the required timelines, although some focus group participants noted that there are county attorneys who are unwilling to file the petition for a permanency hearing. Judges participating in the State's self-assessment process expressed the opinion that the permanency hearings are effective in keeping everyone on track and focused on the child's permanency goal.

Information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that a recent random-sample review of 100 out-of-home placement cases resulted in the finding that the most current cases were reviewed in a timely manner, but cases that originated at least 3 years ago were less likely to be in compliance with the 12-month review requirement.

Most stakeholders commenting on the case review process during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that permanency reviews are held in a timely manner. Several stakeholders suggested that the timeliness of hearings may be attributed to the fact that judges are very focused on child welfare issues and on permanency. This was attributed in part to the efforts of Iowa's Court Improvement Project. Stakeholders noted that the primary barriers to timely reviews are overloaded court dockets and requests for continuances. Some stakeholders indicated that the timeliness of the permanency hearing varies depending on the judge.

**Item 28. Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

This item is rated as a Strength because Iowa has established a process for terminating parental rights which conforms to ASFA provisions and functions as required.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Iowa Court Improvement Project identified delays in resolving appeals of termination of parental rights (TPR) decisions as a significant barrier to achieving permanency for children in foster care. As a result, the Court Improvement Project developed recommendations for rules of appellate procedure changes to the Supreme Court, which were approved and implemented in January 2002. The Statewide Assessment notes that these changes have resulted in a substantial reduction in the average time from the time of TPR appeal to the final decision. Before the new ruling, this time span averaged about

367 days. Since the new ruling, the average time is about 90 days and, in a recent review of cases, 90 percent of the cases using the new procedure were settled in an average of 47 days.

Stakeholders commenting during the onsite CFSR on the issue of TPR procedures expressed the opinion that the State does have a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. However, some stakeholders suggested that adherence to this process varies depending on the judges' and county attorneys' perceptions of TPR.

Stakeholders in the three counties included in the onsite CFSR reported that judges in those counties usually are strict about adherence to the ASFA timeframes for filing for TPR. They noted that the courts comply with State law which requires that the agency seek TPR 12 months after a child's entry into foster care, although the court can grant a 6-month extension if it is believed that reunification will occur during that time.

Some stakeholders noted that the tracking of the timeframes for individual cases is done by the court, while other stakeholders indicated that FACS produces alerts to caseworkers each month, identifying children who have been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. Stakeholders also expressed the opinion that, when appropriate, caseworkers will identify compelling reasons not to file for TPR and submit them to the court. Stakeholders suggested that filing for TPR is timely because most judges do not require that a child have an identified adoptive home prior to filing for TPR, and because State policy permits only one 6-month extension to filing.

Several stakeholders in Woodbury County expressed concern that in some cases, TPR is taking place too quickly and possible reasons for not filing are not given due consideration by the court. Generally, if the court determines at the 12-month hearing that the child cannot go home, the court will seek TPR. This was noted to be particularly problematic in cases in which parental substance abuse is an issue and in cases involving Native American children. Stakeholders reported that the lack of substance abuse treatment facilities results in long waiting lists for services. Parents can sometimes get caught up in that waiting list while the "ASFA clock is still ticking." Stakeholders in Woodbury County noted that the court in that county does not comply with the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), does not allow Tribal representatives to serve as expert witnesses, and does not consider Tribal input in any court hearings. Stakeholders suggested that the ASFA timelines are detrimental to the Native American communities because the children's connections to the Tribe are severed when TPR occurs.

State-level stakeholders reported that filing for TPR in a timely manner does not always occur consistently across the State. Although the courts are usually compliant, the county attorneys are not. Sometimes the county attorney will not file for TPR because he or she does not believe in it. Stakeholders noted that Court Appointed Special Advocates often will recommend TPR when the county attorney will not.

**Item 29. Provides a process for foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.**

\_\_\_\_ Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because key stakeholders in DHS, the courts, and the community do not seem to have a clear and uniform understanding of who is responsible for notifying foster parents of reviews or court hearings, although the Statewide Assessment indicates that there is a written protocol for this process.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa has policy and prescribed procedures for providing caregivers of children in foster care with notice of, and an opportunity to be heard in, hearings held with respect to the children in their care. These policies and procedures apply to DHS administrative reviews, FCRB reviews, and court reviews and hearings.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, a Foster Family Satisfaction Study conducted in 2000 indicated that foster parents are not consistently receiving adequate notice of hearings and reviews across the State and are not receiving a copy of the court order that indicates their responsibilities. However, in a focus group of foster parents held in late 2002, many foster parents said that they are included in the hearing notice distribution and that they are able to provide information and feedback to the court. The foster parents in the focus groups also identified concerns regarding the court hearing, including the following:

- They were concerned about appearing at hearings where parents may be present.
- Some would rather submit reports or letters to the court than attend the hearing.
- They received notice, but they were discouraged from active participation either by the case manager, the licensing agency, or court personnel.

While several stakeholders commenting on this factor during the onsite CFSR suggested that foster parents are routinely notified of court hearings, others said that notification rarely occurs. In addition, stakeholders provided different perceptions regarding who is responsible for notification and how notification takes place. For example, some stakeholders said that the agency caseworker is responsible for notifying foster parents, and that this is usually done by telephone or possibly through a letter. Other stakeholders reported that the court is responsible and that notice is done by a letter. Still other stakeholders indicated that the dates of hearings are included in the case plan, and that foster parents should view that as “notification.”

Stakeholders commenting on the issue of foster parent input during hearings and reviews agreed that although foster parents generally are asked to speak during FCRB and DHS reviews, their ability to provide input during court reviews and hearings varies across judges. Some stakeholders suggested that it is rare that the judge will ask foster parents for their input, while other stakeholders noted that judges routinely ask for foster parent input. Several stakeholders reported that foster parents are discouraged from attending hearings by their caseworkers.

## VI. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

Iowa is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System

**Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.**

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 is rated as a Strength because the State has numerous standards in place that address the health and safety of children in foster family homes and other types of placements.

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS has standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided with quality services that protect their health and safety. These standards are reflected and formalized in the Iowa Code, Iowa Administrative rules (IAC), the Department's Employee Policy Manual, and State handbooks for service providers and staff training. Iowa standards address issues ranging from safety and risk assessment to transporting children to licensing and certification standards.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the Division of Behavioral, Developmental and Protective Services for Families, Adults and Children is responsible for developing policy standards and setting performance standards. The eight Service Area Managers and staff are responsible for developing strategies to achieve performance standards. The Field Operation Support Unit (FOSU) is responsible for providing support and technical assistance to caseworkers and supervisors through policy clarifications, case/clinical consultation,

development of local procedures for implementing statewide policies, staff training, and customer service complaint resolution. The Division of Results Based Accountability (RBA) is responsible for coordinating the agency's strategic planning efforts.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR reported that licensing expectations and standards are in place. State-level stakeholders indicated that the State has policies in place to monitor background checks and safety priorities in foster homes and that licensed foster homes must have safety plans in their homes in the event of fire or emergencies. Also criminal background checks are required for members of all foster families. However, stakeholders noted that caseworkers do not appear to be clear about the practice standards apart from what is in the State policy manuals. Also, the standard for supervisory visits with children in foster care (visits are to occur every 90 days) may not be sufficient to ensure children's safety.

**Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because Iowa currently does not have a Statewide quality assurance system.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa currently has no Statewide comprehensive, coordinated quality assurance (QA) system that is designed to assess systemic factors and the effectiveness of DHS' service programs. Many participants in focus groups for the Statewide Assessment reported that there is no established, coordinated method by which the quality and effectiveness of child welfare services are evaluated and service quality improvement activities are undertaken. The Statewide Assessment also notes that diminished budget resources and the recent reorganization have reduced the agency's capacity for QA. However, DHS is developing continuing program QA initiatives such as Quality Service Review (QSR), and is moving forward with the child welfare utilization management project.

Stakeholders commenting on the issue of QA during the onsite CFSR expressed opinions consistent with information provided in the Statewide Assessment. These stakeholders noted that prior to the extensive budget cuts; the agency had clear procedures in place for case reviews and quality assessments. However, since the budget cuts, the responsibility for QA has been put on supervisors. Stakeholders voiced concern about the ability of supervisors to conduct adequate QA since the caseworker to supervisor ratio is about 11 to 1, which means that most supervisors oversee about 600 cases. In addition, some stakeholders reported that most supervision is administrative and there is a dearth of clinical supervision regarding case practices.



State-level stakeholders noted that the State plans to continue the QSRs that were suspended temporarily due to preparation for the CFSR.

## VII. TRAINING

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training.

**Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.**

\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because, although the State has a well-conceptualized and broad pre-service training curriculum for caseworkers, the training system is not functioning as it should. Specifically, the ability of caseworkers to participate in training in a timely manner has been compromised due to reductions in the frequency of offering the training and the high caseloads that caseworkers carry. Further, in the absence of a functioning QA system, the agency is reliant on front-line supervisors to ensure quality casework, but there is not sufficient supervisory training to support supervisors in this process.

According to the Statewide Assessment, new child protective caseworkers attend a 5-day basic training, which is held quarterly. This is followed by two “intermediate” training courses that are expected to be completed within 18 months of employment but no later than the end of the second year of employment. The intermediate courses address the application of legal and medical issues to child protective assessments (3 days), and the impact of domestic violence and substance abuse on child abuse assessments (2 days). Upon completion of the basic and intermediate training, new caseworkers are tested and must achieve a score of 75 percent correct. It is recommended, but not required, that new child protective staff attend basic training prior to case assignment.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, training for new social work case managers is organized around a series of 9 sequential modules which alternate between classroom training followed by on-the-job modules that put training into practice. New case managers are expected to complete at least the first two modules before they are assigned cases. However, this is not always possible due to downsizing and reduction of training opportunities. At the end of the first three classroom training modules, the trainers provide written feedback to the student and to his or her supervisor to assist with the transfer of learning from the classroom to the workplace.

Stakeholders commenting on the issue of training during the CFSR generally expressed the opinion that the basic training for new caseworkers is of good quality but is not sufficient to adequately prepare caseworkers for their jobs. One problem identified was the expectation that supervisors and more experienced caseworkers would be available to mentor, monitor, or otherwise provide on the job training after and during formal training. Stakeholders noted that when caseworkers carry caseloads of 35-50 cases or more, and supervisors have as many as 10 caseworkers to supervise, no time is available for on-the-job training or close monitoring of new caseworkers. In addition, although State-level stakeholders suggested that caseworkers are expected to do very little casework until they receive the basic training, local-level stakeholders indicated that because of the decrease in the frequency that training is offered, many caseworkers receive full caseloads prior to training. These stakeholders suggested that assignment of cases is based on the volume of work not on the readiness of the staff member. Some stakeholders noted that the lack of training of many new caseworkers is further exacerbated by the fact that the majority of caseworkers do not have undergraduate degrees in social work (BSWs) and that many supervisors do not have either undergraduate or graduate degrees in social work. Stakeholders also expressed concern that there is no core supervisory training for new supervisors.

Stakeholders in Woodbury County noted that the agency in that county uses a team system to staff cases that is helpful for monitoring new caseworkers. Under this system, four or five caseworkers work together as a team and have knowledge of one another's cases. When a new caseworker joins the team before receiving any training, the more experienced caseworkers are able to both mentor the caseworker and monitor progress on his or her cases. Stakeholders reported that there is a very low rate of caseworker turnover in Woodbury County with only one new caseworker being hired within the last year.

Stakeholders in Polk County reported that the county attorneys conduct new caseworker training to help them prepare for court. Several stakeholders suggested that caseworkers view this training as important and effective.

One key training gap identified by stakeholders concerned training on ICWA. According to stakeholders, new caseworkers do not receive any training on ICWA.

**Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.**

\_\_\_\_ Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the availability of on-going training has been significantly reduced due to a 75 percent reduction in funds available for training purposes. At the time of the onsite CFSR, stakeholders reported that ongoing training is not readily available to DHS staff.

According to the Statewide Assessment, experienced child protective staff members were historically required to attend 4 days of Child Protective Academy training each year. However, this requirement was dropped in State FY 2003 due to cuts in the training budget. The Statewide Assessment also notes that there are no specific ongoing training requirements for social work case managers, although DHS does make some training options available to experienced case managers. For example, during 2002 DHS implemented a new training series on Family Team Decision Making.

With regard to ongoing training, the Statewide Assessment reports that, due to the 75 percent cut in State training dollars for FY 2003, training has been significantly reduced for ongoing social caseworker courses. However, the Statewide Assessment notes that it is anticipated that the Council on Human Services FY 2004 budget recommendation for training will increase dollars and expand the range of courses offered. Also, DHS is bringing a series of courses to each service area in the State as a means to continue to impact practice within the reduced resources. These courses are offered twice in each service area and cover the following topics: Safety and Safety Planning; Coaching for Reflective Practice; Promoting Case Practice Success; and Best Practice Forum.

Stakeholders commenting on ongoing staff training during the onsite CFSR expressed the following opinions:

- There is a dearth of ongoing training opportunities for caseworkers and supervisors and no funds to pay for the training opportunities that are available.
- There is no overarching long-term staff development program involving improving skills and knowledge.
- Even if there were numerous ongoing training opportunities, staff would not be able to find the time to attend them because of their extremely large caseloads.

State-level stakeholders noted that the agency has web-based training, but this was not mentioned by any of the local-level stakeholders.

**Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 was rated as a Strength because pre-service training is offered using the Parenting for Safety Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP) curriculum and in-service training is provided through the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (IFAPA).

According to the Statewide Assessment, potential foster parents in Iowa are required to complete 30 hours of pre-service training prior to initial licensure. Pre-service training is offered monthly at 15 community colleges. DHS plans to implement the PS-MAPP curriculum Statewide for the 30 hours of pre-service training. The Statewide Assessment notes that all pre-service training requirements must be met prior to initial licensing. “Treatment level” foster parents are required to complete 12 additional hours of treatment training and complete all certification requirements.

Information in the Statewide Assessment indicates that, in addition to the pre-service training, foster parents are required to complete 6 hours of in-service training annually, and treatment level foster parents are required to complete an additional 6 hours of in-service training annually for re-licensure. This training requirement may be met through a variety of modalities including group training, individual training, videos, tapes, and books.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that participants in a foster/adoptive parent focus group expressed the following opinions:

- The current foster parent training is inconsistently delivered.
- Foster parents are not adequately prepared to meet the needs of special needs children (85 percent of the children placed in foster care have special needs).
- Lack of sufficient training is a causal factor to the instability of placements.
- Although there are dedicated case managers who try to help foster parents, ongoing support is not provided because of high case manager caseloads.

Stakeholders commenting on the issue of foster parent training during the onsite CFSR were in general agreement that the MAPP pre-service training is a significant improvement over the prior training. However, some stakeholders expressed concern that the MAPP training will be available only for new foster parents. They suggested that existing foster parents would benefit greatly from this training. Stakeholders also reported that the training for facility staff is excellent.

Stakeholders noted that because of budget cuts, DHS provides very little in the way of ongoing training for foster parents; most of the training opportunities available to foster parents are provided by the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (IFAPA). IFAPA offers support groups and holds an annual conference as well as other training opportunities. There was general agreement among stakeholders that the ongoing training available through IFAPA is of high quality.

Stakeholders identified the following specific training needs for foster parents that currently are not being met:

- How to work with schools and courts.
- Mental health issues.
- Substance abuse issues.
- Parenting children who have been sexually abused.
- Parenting drug-affected children.
- Parenting children with severe behavior problems.
- Attachment disorder.

## VIII. SERVICE ARRAY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1X	2	3	4

Iowa did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array.

**Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement because recent budget cuts have resulted in significant reductions in the service array, leading to a number of critical services either being eliminated or sharply reduced, particularly with regard to culturally appropriate and bilingual services. Stakeholders reported that these services were available prior to the recent budget cuts.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State has an array of services designed to help children safely and appropriately return to families from which they have been removed. These latter services include family-centered services (in-home services), family preservation services, and family reunification services. When reunification is not possible, DHS provides ongoing care, adoption services, adoption subsidy, post adoption services, and transition services for children aging out of foster care.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the availability of services has been affected by recent budget cuts. Many programs have been eliminated or significantly reduced. Many stakeholders who participated in focus groups, interviews, or surveys conducted as part of the State's self-assessment process, commented on the negative impact budget cuts have had on family centered and family preservation services. Some stakeholders commented that services for older youth such as transition planning and independent living services are not sufficient, and in some places, non-existent. However, the lack of these latter services cannot be attributed solely to budget cuts because provision of these services was problematic prior to the reduction in funds. Also, the State receives funds from the Federal government specifically for independent living services.

Most stakeholders commenting on the issue of service array during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the cuts in funding have had a negative impact on the service array. They noted that there are sufficient in-home services to prevent placement or to prevent re-entry into foster care after reunification, although significant gaps remain in the kinds of services needed to promote reunification or enhance children's well-being. The service gaps identified by stakeholders included the following:

- High-end mental health services for children.
- Substance abuse treatment services for adults and adolescents.
- Residential treatment services.
- Foster and adoptive homes for special needs children and sibling groups.
- Treatment services for sex offenders.
- Independent living services for youth in long-term foster care (the services that are available usually are offered 3 months before the child ages out of the system).
- Culturally appropriate or bilingual services for Native American, Hispanic, and Asian children.
- Quality mental health assessments.

Stakeholders expressed high praise for the Community Partnership Program in which community providers are co-located within the child welfare agency. Stakeholders also noted that “decategorization” (Decat) funding has increased access to services, but that cuts in this funding have been detrimental to service provision. “Decat” funding uses State dollars to serve children across agencies.

A serious concern expressed by many stakeholders pertained to the legislation that put a cap on funding for residential treatment. This has resulted in situations in which children who are in critical need of residential treatment are left in highly inappropriate placements, such as shelters or juvenile justice facilities, because there is no available space in a residential treatment or group home facility. In addition, stakeholders noted that when a space does become available, children are moved on a “first come, first served” basis rather than on the basis of need.

**Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s CFSP.**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because services are not available in all areas of the State, particularly in rural areas. For example, a lack of foster family or residential treatment services in some areas of the State often results in children being placed outside their home communities. In addition, DHS budget reductions have resulted in fewer services and consequently long waiting lists to receive services.

According to the Statewide Assessment, funding for services is allocated to each of the eight service areas to ensure that core services such as foster care, adoption, and in-home services are available in all service areas. Many communities have worked collaboratively through Decategorization Committees and other community partnerships to develop new programs and services that address the particular needs in their local area.

However, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, Iowa’s population distribution makes service delivery particularly problematic in rural areas where the distance and travel time between clients limits the cost-effectiveness of service delivery for providers. Services such as day treatment, specialized treatment, and group care are not available in every community, resulting in children being placed outside of their communities and neighborhood schools. Also, services provided by mental health facilities often require that children are placed a distance from home. Finally, budget reductions have resulted in drastic reductions in services to help children.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, stakeholders who participated in focus groups or surveys as part of the State’s self-assessment process noted that the accessibility of services across the State has been negatively impacted by budget reductions. Some stakeholders

commented that services to preserve families, reunite families, and promote permanency are available across the State. However, they also noted that urban areas have more services and higher quality services than can be found in rural areas, particularly with regard to substance abuse treatment and mental health services.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR expressed opinions that are consistent with the information provided in the Statewide Assessment. Several stakeholders also expressed the opinion that the lack of transportation in rural areas is a considerable barrier to accessing services and reported that there are very few dental providers in many areas of the State, particularly providers who will accept Medicaid. Stakeholders noted that Iowa's reimbursement rate for Medicaid is very low. Stakeholders in Woodbury County said that obtaining vision-related services for children in foster care is becoming a problem in that county.

**Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.**

\_\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_X\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 37 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because services are not routinely meeting the diverse needs of the children and families. Flexibility in designing services to meet the individual needs through "decat" funds has been significantly reduced due to budget cuts.

According to the Statewide Assessment, services are individualized and are delivered through programs such as "Decat" and the Clark Partnership for Protecting Children that focus on specialized services to meet the needs of children considered at risk. However, the Statewide assessment notes that the agency's ability to individualize services has been limited by the elimination or drastic reduction of programs due to recent budget cuts.

Most stakeholders commenting on the issue of individualizing services during the onsite CFSR reported that DHS is not consistently effective in meeting the diverse needs of families. This was attributed in part to a lack of culturally- and language-appropriate services for Hispanic, Asian, and Native American children and to a cut in flexible funding available from Decategorization funds. Stakeholders noted that the Decat funds were previously used for creating individualized services and responding to the unique needs of children and families, but with the reductions in the general funds available to the agency, some areas of the State are using Decat funds to cover basic services that were previously covered by other funding sources.

Stakeholders generally agreed that individualizing services was more effective when there was access to flexible funds and that the same services are being provided to children and parents in a "cookie cutter" fashion regardless of their appropriateness.



However, some stakeholders suggested that, even with limited access to funds, high quality caseworkers are able to produce service plans that are individualized to meet unique needs of children and families.

Several stakeholders noted that family team meetings and other forms of family group decision making are effective in identifying individual needs and determining ways to access services to meet those needs. Stakeholders in Polk County, identified the Polk County Gateway program as a program that provides services and supports when traditional services are not available. State-level stakeholders also noted that Medicaid dollars are used to access child welfare services.

## IX. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4X

**Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP.**

☒X\_\_\_ Strength      \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

This item is rated as a Strength because the State is very inclusive and engages many partners in the development and implementation of the goals and objectives of the CFSP. Despite the rating of a Strength for this item, there is a need for the State to be more inclusive of Tribes in planning its goal and activities.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Division of Behavioral, Developmental, and Protective Services (DBDPS) within DHS is the organizational unit within the State agency responsible for the development, operation, and implementation of the Child and Family Services Plan. DBDPS works in partnership with the DHS Office of Field Operations and Service Delivery Areas to administer Title IV-E and IV-B programs under the Social Security Act. DBDPS employs partnerships with Juvenile Court Services; the Court Improvement Project; other State agencies such as Public Health, Education, Human Rights-Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, Inspections and Appeals-licensing staff and Child Advocacy Board; private provider agencies; and other stakeholder groups in effort to plan, implement and monitor programs serving children and families. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, budget reductions and consequent agency reorganization have recently had a negative impact on the ability of DHS to partner with community stakeholders. For example, budget cuts have resulted in less staff being available to attend interagency meetings and participate on various task groups and committees in the community.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR indicated that DHS consults with a wide variety of community agencies and stakeholders in developing the Child and Family Services Plan. State-level stakeholders also reported that the State worked closely with various Tribes to pass legislation to make the requirements governing notification of Tribes under ICWA stronger. Local-level stakeholders reported that the local child welfare plan is crafted by DHS with input from local stakeholders, particularly representatives from the Juvenile Court.

**Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as Strength because the State maintains a consultative relationship with its partners.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa has a number of other groups that they partner with to enhance services to children including the Child Welfare Partnership Committee, the Court Improvement Project Oversight Committee (CIP), and Prevent Child Abuse Iowa. Many of these groups produce annual reports, which are used in preparation of the annual CFSP.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR indicated that the agency works in consultation with representatives from various agencies and organizations to produce annual reports of progress. Several stakeholders, however, indicated that the Tribes are not routinely asked to participate in developing the State plans or the annual updates, do not get copies of the State plans, and are not asked to comment on them.

Stakeholders reported that there was much collaboration with the Masquakie Settlement and the Native American Settlement in Sioux-Woodbury County in the development of the CFSR Statewide Assessment and the passage of an Indian Child Welfare Act which was passed by the Iowa General Assembly in 2003. Staff from DHS meets quarterly with the Community Initiative for Native American Children. Native Americans also are a part of the CFSR Program Improvement Plan team.

**Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength because the State maximizes opportunities to coordinate with Federal and federally assisted service programs.

According to the Statewide Assessment, DHS is routinely involved in partnerships at both the State and local levels with other State agencies and Statewide entities that serve the same general population of children and families in order to most effectively coordinate service development, delivery, and program monitoring. Examples include partnerships with the following: Department of Education, Department of Public Health, including its Division of Substance Abuse; Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning; Department of Management, Community Empowerment Office; and Inspections and Appeals, State Foster Care Board and CASA Program.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR reported that DHS coordinates services with other agencies at both the local and State levels. Many stakeholders praised the coordination between juvenile justice and child welfare. However, stakeholders identified the following concerns with regard to coordination of services:

- Children's mental health services are delivered by multiple agencies and providers. Therefore, it is very challenging to deliver services in a coordinated manner.
- Tribes want to have written agreements in place with the State. At present there are no written agreements in place between the State and the Tribes regarding IV-E or any other issues of concern.
- There is a considerable communication barrier among child welfare, substance abuse treatment, and mental health. A family could be involved with all three agencies and "no one would know that."
- Mental health personnel do not attend multidisciplinary team meetings or court hearings because the time is not reimbursable.

State-level stakeholders noted that mental health and child welfare are conducting joint treatment planning to identify mental health needs and bring all parties together to develop a comprehensive plan.

## **X. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION**

<b>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</b>				
Rating	<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>Substantial Conformity</b>	
	1	2	3	4X

Iowa achieved substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

**Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.**

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as a Strength because the State has established and implemented comprehensive standards for foster family homes and child care institutions.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa has maintained comprehensive standards for foster family homes, adoptive homes, and group care facilities since 1981. These rules are routinely developed and revised, as needed, to reflect changes in State and Federal laws and to implement policy initiatives. DHS recently began using the PS-MAPP to train foster and adoptive families. However, DHS does not currently have consistent standards for unlicensed relative placements. The initiation and management of relative placements varies across the State.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue reported that standards are in place for foster family homes and child care institutions. Foster parents must meet certain licensing requirements and must complete training hours to be licensed and re-licensed. In addition, there is a formal protocol for responding to abuse in foster care, including a process for the foster parent to respond to the allegations.

Although the standards exist, stakeholders reported that some standards are applied more rigorously than others. For example, exceptions to foster home capacity are routinely granted to keep siblings together. While granting exceptions or waivers was at one time a central office function, it is now done locally. In addition, stakeholders reported that although part of the standards requires

unannounced visits, these usually are not really “unannounced.” Finally, several stakeholders suggested that some foster homes are of questionable quality.

**Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength because standards are applied consistently.

According to the Statewide Assessment, family foster home standards are applied to all licensed homes. Adoption approval standards are applied equally to all potential adoptive individuals and families. Finally, the Department of Inspections and Appeal (DIA) routinely inspects all group care facilities licensed by DHS to ensure that licensing standards are equally applied. However, Iowa has a process in place to grant exceptions for specific licensing standards in particular situations.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue for the onsite CFSR indicated that the standards for foster families are applied equally to licensed relative and non-relative foster homes. However, unlicensed relative placements do not require the same standards. They are not required to take training or to meet certain requirements, although the agency conducts a home study and a criminal background check before placing a child with an unlicensed relative. Also, unlicensed relative caregivers are not eligible for foster care payments, although they may receive payments from TANF if the child is eligible.

**Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength because the State consistently conducts the necessary background clearances that are in compliance with Federal requirements.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa requires criminal background record checks, child abuse registry checks, sex offender registry checks, and adult abuse registry checks on all potential foster and adoptive families as well as all individuals over age 14 residing in an applicant's home. These checks must be completed prior to licensure. When children are placed in the homes of unlicensed relatives, the Court may request criminal background checks.

Background checks may be conducted in other States, based on information gathered from potential foster and adoptive families and other sources. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, national criminal record checks are not required but may be conducted if the caseworker has knowledge that families have lived in other States. Fingerprinting is not required in Iowa. Background checks are not required but optional for re-licensure of foster families. When the pre-placement investigation and report are waived for prospective adoptive parents, criminal background checks and child abuse checks may be requested by DHS or by the Court. DHS evaluates all positive background checks based on certain criteria.

The Statewide Assessment notes that criminal records checks and child abuse checks are required, prior to employment, for persons employed at group care living facilities and licensed child placing agencies. The record checks are repeated if the person becomes employed at another facility. If there is a positive check, the agency is required by statute to evaluate the crime or abuse according to the same criteria as for foster and adoptive families.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue noted that national checks are not done due to budget constraints unless the family has lived in another State. Both relatives and non-relatives are subjected to background checks if they are licensed as foster parents.

**Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.**

☐ Strength      ☒ Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement because, although the State has a Statewide recruitment contract in place, there is insufficient focus on recruiting foster and adoptive homes that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children entering foster care, particularly Native American children.

According to the Statewide Assessment, in 2002, the agency contracted with the IFAPA to recruit and retain foster and adoptive parents Statewide. DHS is actively expanding recruitment efforts through the KidSake Project managed by IFAPA to recruit foster and adoptive families for children with special needs including families that represent the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for

whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. These children include African American and Hispanic children and children with special needs. DHS currently uses the following recruitment strategies: adoption fairs, media events, State and local recognition events, foster parent newsletters, partnerships with community organizations, and others.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, foster parents who participated in the focus group for the State's self-assessment process indicated that they are not seeing a recruitment effort targeting foster and adoptive families that meet the racial and ethnic diversity of children in foster care is not effective.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR were in general agreement that recruitment is not sufficient and does not effectively target families that match the race, ethnicity, and needs of the children in the foster care system. Several stakeholders reported that part of the problem is due to the loss of local recruitment efforts. According to these stakeholders, the counties once had local recruiters on staff, but that due to budget cuts, all formal recruiting is being done at the State level. This means that the personal contacts between the agency and various communities such as the Tribes and the African American communities, are no longer being continuously maintained and reported. In one county, stakeholders noted that there has been no recruitment of ethnic homes since the responsibility for recruiting was shifted to the State level.

Although State-level stakeholders reported that Iowa has seen an increase in the overall number of foster parents, the agency does not have the diversity of foster homes to match the children's needs. For example, there is a shortage of Native American and Spanish-speaking homes. Some stakeholders reported that DHS licensing requirements are too stringent for Native American families in terms of space and physical requirements.

With regard to the issue of retention, stakeholders reported that foster parents do not get the supports they need from the agency and that this affects retention. Some stakeholders also noted that it takes between 6 to 12 months to get licensed and that many prospective foster parents may drop out of the process in frustration.

**Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.**

☒ Strength      ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength because the State has a functioning process for obtaining cross-jurisdictional resources for waiting children.



According to the Statewide Assessment, Iowa code requires that, if an adoptive home has not been located, children must be placed on the Iowa Adoption Exchange System (IAES) 60 days after termination of parental rights (TPR) and assignment of guardianship to the State. If a placement has not been located 90 days after registration on IAES it is required that the child be registered on a national electronic photo listing system such as AdoptUSKids. Deferrals for these may be granted for limited time periods for specific reasons. In addition, reports must be submitted to the Court every 45 days detailing specific activities completed to place children for adoption in a timely manner after TPR.

It is the responsibility of DHS adoption caseworkers to enter children with termination of parental rights into IAES. A monthly printout of children registered on IAES is generated by DHS and sent to KidSake, which uses this information to register children on the National Adoption Exchange, the Internet photo listing, AdoptUSKids (formerly, Faces of Adoption) and to identify children that should be included in the photo listing book, *Iowa's Waiting Child*. *Iowa's Waiting Child* often is sent to families in all parts of the State and to families in other States. It is noted in the Statewide Assessment that because of high caseloads, caseworkers may not be registering children on IAES or referring them to KidSake in a timely manner.

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR noted that placements are made across State lines. A few stakeholders mentioned that there are issues with the Interstate Compact that create problems and delays. The State also routinely uses State and national adoption exchanges and purchase of service agreements with out-of-State agencies to recruit adoptive resources.

In Woodbury County, stakeholders expressed concern that placements of Native American Children were not always in compliance with ICWA.

## **XI. DETERMINATION OF SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMITY**

For each outcome and systemic factor listed below, mark “Y” where the State is determined to be in substantial conformity and “N” where the State is determined not to be in substantial conformity. For each outcome or systemic factor marked “N,” place a check beside the performance indicator, listed by item number in this form, that has been determined to be an area needing improvement.

### **Safety**

### **Child and Family Well-Being**

☐N\_\_\_ Quality Assurance System

☐N\_\_\_ Outcome S1

☐N\_\_\_ Outcome WB1

☐Y\_\_\_ Item 30

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 1  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 2  
\_Y\_\_\_ Outcome S2  
  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 3  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 4

**Permanency**

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Outcome P1  
  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 5  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 6  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 7  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 8  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 9  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 10

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Outcome P2  
  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 11  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 12  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 13  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 14  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 15  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 16

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 17  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 18  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 19  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 20

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Outcome WB2  
  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 21

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Outcome WB3  
  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 22  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 23

**Systemic Factors**

\_Y\_\_\_ Statewide Information System

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 24  
  
\_N\_\_\_ Case Review System

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 25  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 26  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 27  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 28  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 29

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 31  
  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Training

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 32  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 33  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 34

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Service Array

\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 35  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 36  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 37

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Agency Responsiveness to the  
Community

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 38

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 39  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 40

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Foster and Adoptive Parent  
Licensing, Recruitment, and  
Retention

\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 41  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 42  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 43  
\_\_\_N\_\_\_ Item 44  
\_\_\_Y\_\_\_ Item 45